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Section . W624





A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN, THE DIVINE.

BY

THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

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STEREOTYPED BY  
GEORGE A. CURTIS;  
NEW ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY.

## P R E F A C E.

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THE Apocalypse has generally been regarded as a very dark and difficult book. This opinion has been so prevalent that it has been thought a mark of wisdom not to attempt to explain it. One author says, "Calvin was wise, because he wrote not on the Apocalypse." That the work is more difficult for us to understand than it was for those to whom it was originally addressed, we have no doubt. It was to them probably a work of deep interest, of profitable contemplation, and a source of high hope. They had means of understanding it which we do not, and cannot, have. But because we have not all their advantages, shall we not attempt to understand it at all? What made the book so dark to Calvin, Graserus, Whitby, and others? Perhaps they looked at it under peculiar disadvantages. For our part, we are willing to confess, that if a man believes the Apocalypse was not written until after the destruction of Jerusalem, and if he believes in the common notions concerning the day of God's wrath, the judgment of the dead, the great dragon, the bottomless pit, &c., &c., he cannot understand the book. He will be continually hampered by his pre-conceived system; and, in harmony with such a system, no probable interpretation can be given. Although Professor Stuart has produced an excellent work upon the

Apocalypse, — the most consistent and valuable, we think of any we have ever seen, — yet he was manifestly troubled and warped in his judgment in interpreting certain parts by his theological system, or creed, especially his belief in endless misery, and the popular notions of a future judgment. The devotion to creeds has done more to prevent the Apocalypse from being fitly interpreted than any other cause. It has produced the most extravagant and perverted views of it; and the variety and enormity of these views have led thousands to conclude that the work is altogether inscrutable to human wisdom.

But is this book absolutely dark. so that it is impossible for us to get at the meaning at all? Is it impossible to do anything to throw light on the chaos? We think not. If anything can be done, ought we not to do it? Those preachers who seek to create excitement and alarm — who operate upon the fears of the weak and uninstructed — do not fail to resort to this book. Its sublime metaphors and allegories, when misapplied, furnish them with rich subjects. Why should not a counter effort be made to explain it? Let us apply the principles of sound criticism to the interpretation, and we may do something towards bringing out the true sense of the book. Let us gain what light we can now, and wait for the advancing day to bring us more. With these feelings we have entered upon the effort before us.

It is proper here to state, that the first form in which this commentary appeared was in detached articles in a weekly religious paper, conducted by the author. For many years after entering the ministry, we paid little or no attention to the

Apocalypse. When we glanced at it, as we occasionally did, it seemed an utter confusion of metaphors — Alps rising on Alps — without order, without design, and defying the power of man to interpret it. Whether divine or not, we were persuaded nobody could understand it. But as our attention was drawn more and more to it, in consequence of its repeated use by those who opposed the doctrine of the restitution of all things, we began to see here and there (as we thought) glimpses of its meaning. The first true thought that struck us, and that was many years ago, was this — that the account of the judgment of the “dead small and great,” in the conclusion of the 20th chapter, must have its reference to things that transpired before the kingdom of God came with power, because the immediately succeeding passage described the descent of the New Jerusalem, and the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom in the world; — this fact gained, formed a basis for others. The next point was brought to our attention by reading an English publication, viz., that the scene described in the 20th chapter is laid *on the earth*; for the angel mentioned in the first verse came down from heaven to earth, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and therefore the bottomless pit was painted in the scene as being on the earth, or why should the angel have brought the key? He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil and Satan, (the four terms evidently signifying the same thing,) whom he seems to have found on the earth, and bound him, and, without carrying him away anywhere else, cast him into the bottomless pit. It was the power with which these facts

struck our mind, that led us to write the commentary on the chapter referred to, which was published in our religious journal many years ago. It is now two years since we were called again to explain the 20th chapter of the book. In obedience to that request, we republished our former article on the subject, much enlarged. This sharpened our desire for a more careful perusal of the whole book, and we resolved to begin at the commencement of it, and publish our views as far as we could see the meaning. We begun this plan without any design of republishing in book form; but as we proceeded we were more and more encouraged, and grew more and more interested, until we arrived at the end. Our experience in some respects was like that of Dr. Hammond, which we have described in the commentary under Rev. i. 1.

The articles, as they appeared in our religious journal, were written under many disadvantages. The author had been suffering for some time under a nervous debility, produced at first by too great mental action, and irritated exceedingly by other causes. He strongly suspected, in the summer of 1846, that the end of his earthly career was at hand; but he still toiled on, believing he was engaged in a good work. In the belief that death was near, he reviewed the labors of his public life; and although he saw many imperfections in what he had done, he had not a doubt that the doctrines he had defended were the doctrines of the Bible. It was a great satisfaction to him to reflect that he had labored twenty-five years in turning men from darkness to light—from the errors of superstition to worthy views of God and his moral

government. Let the reader forgive the writer this brief allusion to personal matters. They never can appear to others as they appear to himself. We have spoken of the disadvantages under which some parts of the commentary were written. During the writing the author was obliged to make many journeys into the country. He had no other way than to carry his manuscript with him, and hence different parts were written in different places.

We had one settled principle of interpretation, and that was to compare Scripture with Scripture. Although we derived large aid from some commentators upon the Apocalypse, we derived much more from the Old Testament, and from the prophecy of the Lord Jesus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. We always had this encouragement, when we came to a dark passage, that the aid which we needed, if not furnished by other writers in the church, we should in all probability find by a patient examination of the prophets. Scarcely anything tended more strongly to convince us of the divine character of the Apocalypse than the acquaintance which its author manifested with the Old Testament, and the reverence he showed for that book. "Let the Bible explain itself," was our motto. No commentators upon the New Testament can be of one half the advantage to a student in gaining a knowledge of that book, that a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament would give him. There are parts of the Old Testament which we do not understand, but these parts which we can understand convince us that the book is immensely valuable; and that those who cast it away, or

in any manner bring it into disrepute, are unsettling, undesignedly perhaps, the foundation of all revealed religion.

It is scarcely necessary for us to say that the whole commentary has been revised from the form in which it first appeared. Many illustrations, facts, and arguments have been added, and the work thereby has been greatly enlarged. The introduction, containing the essays on the authorship of the work, and also on its date, is entirely new. By the arguments advanced under these heads we know not how others may be affected ; but we are persuaded that the Apocalypse was written by the Apostle JOHN, and that it had its origin before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is in our view a divine book. It bears a striking resemblance to the Old Testament, especially to the book of Daniel, although we are aware it has points peculiar to itself. It is becoming every day better understood, and more highly appreciated. It is of vast importance to the understanding of it, that the date should be rightly fixed ; and it is a matter of sincere gratification, that commentators, without distinction of sect, are coming more and more to believe that it was written prior to the great and last overthrow of the Jewish nation.

We have proceeded upon the belief that the common English version is as correct a translation of the original, taken all in all, as any other ; or, at any rate, that it is sufficiently correct to enable the careful student, even though he be but an English scholar, to gain the sense of the inspired writers. From such a conviction, we have avoided, as far as possible, the sprinkling of our pages with Greek words and phrases. We would by no

means undervalue a knowledge of the original languages in which the Bible was written ; but we are persuaded that it is not absolutely essential to the knowledge of divine truth. If men will but use the common version to the highest advantage to which it may be put, we have no fear that they will fail to get a proper perception of the meaning of the sacred writers.

With these reflections we submit the work to the public. It has been prepared for publication in this form at the urgent request of many friends. If it shall be the means of doing any good, however small, let the praise be given to Him by whom our life has been spared, and our strength measurably continued.

*January 1 1848.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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WE shall consider, in this place, the following questions :

First, Is the Apocalypse a Divine Book? and, By whom was it written?

Second, At what time was it written?

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### FIRST ESSAY.

#### IS THE APOCALYPSE A DIVINE BOOK? AND BY WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN?

I. The book claims to be of divine origin. It is said to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he [i. e., Jesus Christ] sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."—Rev. i. 1, 4. This is the pretension of the book itself. John, the author, styles himself the "brother" of the churches,—their "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus."—See verse 9. This description certainly will apply, with much propriety, to John the apostle. The author of the book further states, that he was banished to "the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."—Verse 9. Was it not true that the apostle John was banished to that island on account of his devotion to the Christian religion? We shall see, as we proceed. There are but two other instances in the book in which the author mentions his name, viz. xxi. 2, and xxii. 8.

In the former he was treating of the descent of the New Jerusalem, or the coming of the kingdom of God with power; and it is a well-known fact, that John the apostle lived until that time, although he had become a very old man. Jesus, when on earth, had pointed him out as the apostle who should live until his coming in his kingdom should take place.—John xxi. 23. It was appropriate, then, for the apostle, if he were the author of the book, to name himself in this connection.

II. We will, in the first place, give an abstract of the testimony of antiquity to the fact that the Apocalypse was written by the apostle John. It is supposed, by some, that it was referred to by writers in the apostolic age. The shepherd of Hermas (A. D. 100) is thought to have imitated in some instances the style and sentiments of the Apocalypse; from which the conclusion may be drawn, not only that the book was then in existence, but also that it was in good credit. For what other reason could have tempted to an imitation?<sup>1</sup> Polycarp, who was in part contemporary with the apostle John, and was constituted bishop of Smyrna (as it is supposed) by him, is thought to have received the Apocalypse as the work of the apostle. Irenæus, a devoted disciple of Polycarp, is well known to have been a fervent believer in the Apocalypse as the work of the apostle; and from the devotion with which he leaned to the opinions of Polycarp, it is believed that the latter venerable father also received it as a divine book. Prof. Stuart says:—"As Polycarp was the personal friend and attendant of John, so was Irenæus of Polycarp. Now Irenæus everywhere, and on all occasions, testifies his full belief in the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse. Could he have done so, if Polycarp had not believed the same? And must not Polycarp have certainly known what was the fact, in regard to the authorship of the Apocalypse?"<sup>2</sup> "Is it

<sup>1</sup> Lardner's Works, 8vo., ii., pp. 62—65; 4to., i., pp. 311—313.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart on the Apocalypse, vol. i., 301.

probable," says Prof. Stuart again, "that Irenæus would venture on such a point to differ from Polycarp? Is it probable he did not know the opinion of Polycarp in respect to the authorship of the Apocalypse?"<sup>1</sup> But it is also said that "Polycarp has cited the Apocalypse once in the only epistle of his that has come down to our times; and that the pious and sublime prayer which this holy man uttered at the awful moment when the flames were about to be kindled around him begins with the identical words of the elders in Rev. xi. 17."<sup>2</sup>

But we pass to testimony of a more undoubted character. And here, as we find an abstract well made to our hand, we avail ourself of the following extract from an article in the "Universalist Expositor," for May, 1833. It was from the pen of the learned editor of that work.

"From the language of Justin Martyr, about A. D. 160, it appears that the Revelation was then received as St. John's. He says, 'A man from among us, by the name of John, one of the apostles of Christ, has prophesied, in the Revelation made to him, that the believers in Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that, shall be the general or eternal resurrection and universal judgment.' Melito, bishop of Sardis, one of the seven churches addressed in the Revelation, flourished about A. D. 174. All his works are now lost; but the historian Eusebius informs us, that among those extant in his time, there was one entitled, 'Of the Revelation of St. John:' a fact which sufficiently discovers the estimation in which the book was then held. In the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienna, written about A. D. 177, it is plainly referred to as authentic Scripture: 'Both the magistrates,' say they, 'and the people were vexed at the very heart, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith, He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he

<sup>1</sup> Stuart on the Apocalypse, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> See Horne's Intro., Littell's edition, 1825, vol. iv., p. 475.

that is holy, let him be holy still :’ a passage quoted from the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, (about A. D. 181,) is said by Eusebius to have adduced proofs from this book, in a work, now lost, which he wrote against certain heretics. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, (about A. D. 185,) often mentions the Revelation, and attributes it implicitly to John the apostle of the Lord. Clemens Alexandrinus (about A. D. 195) quotes it several times, and once in the following language : ‘ They shall sit on twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.’ Tertullian (about A. D. 200) refers to it frequently as the work of the same John who wrote the epistle universally ascribed to the apostle. In one place he says, ‘ Again, the apostle John describes, in the Apocalypse, a sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth of God.’ In another passage, while opposing Marcion, a Gnostic heretic, who disowned several books of the New Testament and altered the rest, he observes, ‘ We have churches which are the disciples of John. For though Marcion rejects the Revelation, yet the succession of bishops, traced back to the beginning, will assure us that John is the author.’

“ Thus far we find no indication that the genuineness of the book had ever been doubted in the regular churches ; though, among the capricious and whimsical heretics of the Gnostic class, it had sometimes shared the fate of the rest of the New Testament. We now approach the period, however, when it appears to have been, for the first time, called in question by any of the orthodox Christians ; and it may be well to take particular notice of the occasion. A gross idea had long prevailed, on the authority of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, that the saints after being raised from the dead, were to reign with Christ a thousand years upon earth, enjoying all the sensual gratifications which nature could afford. The fanatical sect of Montanists had lately carried this notion to the utmost extravagance, and dwelt

upon it as one of their favorite tenets. About A. D. 212, Caius, a Roman presbyter, attacked them; and for the purpose, it would seem, of depriving them of their principal evidence, attributed the Revelation to Cerinthus, a famous Gnostic, contemporary with St. John. 'Cerinthus,' said he, 'in some Revelations which he wrote in the name of a great apostle, imposes on us monstrous things, which he pretends were shown him by angels, saying that after the resurrection there shall be a terrestrial kingdom of Christ, and that men shall live again in Jerusalem, where they will enjoy sensual delights and pleasures, and spend a thousand years in nuptial entertainments.' Such was the ground that Caius took with regard to the author of the Apocalypse.

"His unsupported assertion, however, carries its own refutation on its very face. Who can suppose that a book written by the hated Cerinthus, whose name was never uttered by the orthodox Christians but with abhorrence, would, nevertheless, be received by them, and venerated as we have already seen that the Revelation actually was in the early church? If it be said that they never suspected its real origin; whence, then, we would ask, did Caius obtain his knowledge, after more than a century of profound silence? Indeed, his testimony seems to have weighed nothing with his contemporaries, nor with the immediately succeeding fathers, since they continued to quote the book as indisputably St. John's. Hippolytus (about A. D. 220) refers to it in the following significant connection, 'The Gospel and Apocalypse according to John.' The celebrated Origen, though a zealous opposer of the Millennarians, (A. D. 230—250,) received it without an intimation of doubt, and expressly ascribed it to 'John the son of Zebedee,' that is, the apostle. Cyprian (about A. D. 255) reckoned it among the books of sacred Scripture, without, however, designating the author's name. With these notices before us, we cannot mistake the reputation it still continued to maintain in the church, notwithstanding the impeach-

ment, to all appearance utterly unfounded, which Caius had brought against it.

“ But soon after the death of Origen, it was again brought into question, by a new endeavor to advance the doctrine of the Millennium on its authority. Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, published a very successful work in favor of that tenet, and adduced his proofs from the Apocalypse. The learned Dionysius of Alexandria (about A. D. 260) answered him, and took occasion to make some remarks concerning this book. Certain Christians, he observes, rejected it as the work of the heretic Cerinthus, who acknowledged no happiness except in carnal pleasures;<sup>1</sup> but for himself, he durst not renounce it, since it was generally held in veneration. Its meaning, however, appeared to him undiscoverable, though he was persuaded it ought not to be interpreted in the gross literal sense. Nor could he believe that it was written by John the apostle, on account of the dissimilarity of its genius, thoughts, and style, from those of the evangelist; but he was inclined to suppose its author to have been another John, a presbyter, who, according to Papias, lived in Asia cotemporary with the evangelist, and whom he was willing to acknowledge an inspired man. Such was the conjecture of Dionysius. For some time, however, it seems to have made little impression; but the renown of his learning and talents, and his character as one of the principal bishops in Christendom, drew attention at length to his opinion, and gave it an influence which in the next century impaired the credit of the Apocalypse to a very sensible degree. Eusebius (about A. D. 330) hesitated whether to ascribe it to John the apostle, or to John the presbyter. Cyril of Jerusalem (about A. D. 350) seems not to have received it; and the Council of Laodicea (about A. D. 363) did not insert it in the catalogue of canonical books of Scripture. We need not trace its fortune further, but merely observe in general, that while it was rejected

<sup>1</sup> Here Dionysius evidently alludes to Caius' rejection of the Apocalypse

by some and doubted by others, especially among the Greeks, it was still received by far the larger part of the church. And from the tenor of the foregoing narrative, it will be seen at once that the hesitation which in a few instances arose with regard to its authenticity originated in polemical motives, and ought not therefore to impair in the least the historical evidence afforded by its general reception among the Christians previously to the year 200.”<sup>1</sup>

From the above it will be perceived that the weight of the historical testimony preponderates greatly in favor of the apostolical origin of the Apocalypse. It seems quite impossible to account for the testimonies quoted from the above-named Christian fathers, without supposing that it is a divine book, and that it was written by the apostle John.

In giving the result of the historical testimony, Prof. Stuart says, “If we include in this what the book says of the author, as has been done above, we find a series of testimony and tradition, occasionally called in question, or opposed by few indeed, and but for a little time, until we come down to the latter part of the fourth century. Of the second century, Papias, Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Apollonius, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Tertullian, Irenæus, are leading witnesses. In the third, Methodius, Hippolytus, the Epistle of the Romish Clergy to Cyprian in 250, Victorinus Petavionensis, Commodianus, Cyprian, Origen, Nepos, all testify in its favor. In the fourth century, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Ephrem Syrus, Athanasius, Didymus of Alexandria, Macarius, the Donatists, the Third Council at Carthage, Prudentius, Hilary, Ambrose, Philastrius, Ruffin, Jerome, Lactantius, Julius Firmicus Maternus, and Augustine, (if we may reckon him here,) all unite in their views in favor of the Apocalypse. Some of the eastern

<sup>1</sup> Universalist Expositor, vol. iii., pp. 211—214.

bishops, as we have seen, did not include it among the books to be publicly read.”<sup>1</sup> The same writer says again, “I would not indeed say, with Sir Isaac Newton, that I do not find any other book of the New Testament which is so strongly established, or which was written so early, (remarks on Revelation;) but I may say, with Wetstein, that ‘the Apocalypse from the primitive age was well known and received.’ There are a number of books admitted into the New Testament canon, in respect to which less positive and less general evidence can be produced in behalf of them, than in favor of the Apocalypse. \* \* \* \* Indeed, if the claim of the Apocalypse to be of apostolical origin and canonical be not admitted so far as traditionary history is concerned, one must abandon the admission of any New Testament book on this ground.”<sup>2</sup>

III. We pass now to a brief examination of the internal evidence which may be quoted to show that the Apocalypse is of divine authority, and was written by the apostle John.

There are certain considerations which are of a preliminary character, and to them we first invite the attention of the reader

#### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

1. We suppose there can be no doubt that the author of the Apocalypse was a Hebrew. The whole book bears a Hebrew stamp. The style is Hebrew; its allusions, tropes, metaphors, are all Hebrew. It bears as strongly the evidence of being written by a Hebrew as any other book in all the Bible. There are books unquestionably written by Paul, which do not so infallibly bear the Hebrew stamp as this. We esteem it unquestionable, then, that its author was a Hebrew.

2. It is equally unquestionable that he was a Christian. He everywhere confesses his allegiance to the Son of God. He entitles the book “The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave

<sup>1</sup> Stuart on the Apocalypse, vol. i., p. 368.    <sup>2</sup> Idem, p. 370.

unto him ;” and he confesses that he “ bare record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”— Rev. i. 1, 2. To the Lord Jesus is assigned a prominent place in all the representations of the book. It begins and ends by acknowledging the authority and grace of Christ. So much being certain, we remark that it is further evident,

3. That he had been a diligent student of the Old Testament Scriptures. He was very familiar with them. The truth of this statement shines forth from every page, and is one of the most prominent features of the whole work. How frequently are we called on, in the course of our examination of it, to recognize its relation to the Old Testament. It seems to have grown up out of the ancient Scripture, like a luxuriant branch from its parent root. The allusions of the Revelation are drawn from the earliest sacred history of the Jews ; from the dress of the priests at the temple service ; from the forms of Jewish worship ; from the furniture and symbols of the temple ; from the divisions and characteristics of the twelve tribes ; from the paschal lamb ; from Mount Zion, &c., &c., &c. It is past all denial, that the writer of the Apocalypse was well versed in the Old Testament. How frequently he draws his metaphors from the prophets. It is a fact, which those forget who find fault with the Apocalypse on account of the exuberance of its metaphors, that the most of them are of prophetic origin. There are no two books in the Bible more nearly allied in their style than the book of Daniel and the Apocalypse. The former is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. Compare the 20th chapter of Revelation with the 7th chapter of Daniel, and see how nearly the revelator in some parts imitates the prophet. Compare the 12th and 13th chapters with Daniel’s account of the beast with seven horns, vii. 7, 8. No person can read the Apocalypse with any degree of attention, without being fully persuaded that its author had been deeply studious, not

only of the prophecy of Daniel, but of the Old Testament Scriptures at large.

4. He had not only been deeply studious of the Old Testament Scriptures, but he had also been learned in the school of Christ. Whoever he was, he had heard much, he knew much, and felt much of Christianity. He had sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus. How else could he have known, before the events transpired, the fall of Jerusalem? (for we shall show in another place that the book was written before the destruction of that city.) He had heard the prophecy uttered by the Lord concerning that series of events. There are points of resemblance between certain parts of the Apocalypse and the prophecy referred to, as given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which cannot be mistaken. And if the Apocalypse was written previously to either of the gospels, (as we doubt not it was,) it becomes a nice question how the revelator learned his facts concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem except by divine communication? It would seem probable that he was one of the disciples mentioned in Matthew xxiv. 3, to whom Jesus delivered his notable prophecy on this great subject. See Rev. i. 7, and vi. 12—17, as instances of imagery borrowed from our Lord's description of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is very singular, if the author of the Apocalypse were a pretender, a cheat, and deceiver of mankind, that he should have followed so closely him whom we call distinctively "the way, the truth, and the life."

5. It is worthy of remark, that the Apocalypse claims to be a prophecy. It was such a prophecy, according to the author's confession, as he was empowered to make by "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." If it was a true prophecy, it must be a divine book, for no true prophecy can be otherwise; and if it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, (as is shown in another place,) it certainly was a true prophecy. That the author of the Apocalypse considered his book a prophecy, see i. 3, xxii. 7, 10,

18, 19. Indeed, it is the suggestion, we think, of Sir Isaac Newton, that when St. Peter said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," he had respect to the Apocalypse. No objection can be taken to the prophetic character of the Apocalypse from its metaphorical or mystical style; for many, we might perhaps say all, the sacred prophecies partake more or less of that style. Ancient prophecy declared that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" that Jesus was king in Zion; that Jerusalem should break forth on the right hand and on the left; that Zion should arise and shine; that a new heavens and new earth should be created; that the God of heaven should set up a kingdom, and this kingdom should be given to the Son of man; that fierce beasts should arise, and trouble the nations, and tear and stamp them in pieces, &c.; and who can fail to see that this is the style of the Apocalypse? Moreover, there is a vast concatenation of metaphors in the Apocalypse, not referred to above, which we find scattered through the prophecies of the Old Testament. There is nothing, therefore, in the style of the Apocalypse, which forbids the belief that it is, what its author asserted it to be, — a prophecy.

6. The next fact worthy of attention is, that it was evidently written *for the benefit of the churches*. Whatever view we take of it in other respects, we must acknowledge, that it constantly aimed at the highest spiritual welfare of the churches which were addressed. Nothing could have been more to the advantage of those churches than to have received heartily, and carried out faithfully, the exhortations of the revelator, whoever he was. Again and again he impressed the subject of their duty upon them; he told them of their faults, in a kind and affectionate manner; he warned them of their dangers; he was evidently their friend, and what is more, the friend of God. He did not seek to please them, so much as to benefit them. An impostor

seeks his own advantage; the revelator sought the advantage of others. For himself he sought nothing but peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. He threw his whole soul, and all his powers of body and of mind, into the work of benefiting the churches. He must have been a good man.

7. This is further confirmed by comparing his instructions with those given by the rest of the apostles. Is there any opposition in their nature or design? Keep in mind the fact, that at the time the Apocalypse was written the churches were in the midst of a grievous persecution; and then ask, if the advice given by its author does not accord with the advice given by Jesus, and all his apostles, and all the New Testament writers, to Christians in like circumstances? This might be shown at length, if necessary, by a comparison of particular parts of the Apocalypse with other portions of the New Testament; but we have not room for such a process. We merely hint at a fact, which we are confident will strike the reader with force, and which he can verify at his pleasure.

What presumption are we to make then from these facts? The author of the Apocalypse, whoever the individual may have been, was certainly a Hebrew Christian, well versed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and especially their tropes and metaphors; he claimed to have written a prophecy agreeing in many essential respects with the prophecy of our Lord in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is certain that he aimed at the welfare of the churches he addressed, urging them to stability and faithfulness in the midst of their trials, and assuring them of such rewards as agreed strictly with the nature of Christ's kingdom, and the instructions of acknowledged divine persons on these matters. What then is the presumption? The work was one of very early date. It is supposed by Sir Isaac Newton, that it was known to Peter and to Paul, both of whom, he thought, from the similarity of their language, made quotations from it. It was

probably known to Polycarp, who was in part contemporary with the apostles, and was constituted bishop of Smyrna by the apostle John. What then is the presumption? In the absence of all evidence to the contrary, it is fair to conclude that *the Apocalypse was written by one of the apostles.*

#### INTERNAL PROOFS THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLE JOHN.

These proofs are to be principally derived from a comparison of the Apocalypse with the undisputed writings of John, viz., his Gospel and Epistles. But there is one fact to be borne in mind, and which it may be well to state here, viz., that nearly a generation passed away after the writing of the Apocalypse, and previously to the writing of the Gospel and the Epistles. The Apocalypse was one of the earliest written of the New Testament books, while the Gospel and Epistles of John were written the latest of all. Forty years, or nearly so, probably transpired after the writing of the Apocalypse, before the Gospel was written; and it is altogether probable that John wrote the Epistles also in his extreme old age. We are not to expect, therefore, the vigor in the Gospel and Epistles which we find in the Apocalypse. In the one there may be evidence of transporting excitement, rising into the romantic and the visionary; in the other we may find that the ardor of the meridian of life has calmed down, in extreme old age, into the affectionate, contemplative, and artless. The Christian world has hitherto, for the most part, formed its opinion of John solely from his Gospel and his Epistles. Failing to make due allowance for the fact that he wrote these in exceeding old age, many have concluded that John never had any other element in his character than that of affectionateness and mildness. And supposing, also, that the Apocalypse was written as late as the reign of Domitian, or about A. D. 96, they have found it difficult to believe that it was written by the same hand that wrote the Gospel and Epistles. But if the Apocalypse were written forty years, or nearly so,

before the Gospel, then we have a different basis on which to build our calculations. In the meridian of his life, there was, if we mistake not, vigor and fire in John. If such were not the case, we cannot imagine why Jesus, when he called his twelve apostles, and ordained them, distinguished James and John with the title *Boanerges*, or the Sons of Thunder; Mark iii. 17. Where in the Gospel or Epistles shall we look for the thunder? It is true that, in one instance, the tendency of John's mind to hyperbole seems to have broken out in the last sentence that we have any account he ever wrote; we mean at the very conclusion of his Gospel, where he tells us that if all the things which Jesus did had been written, the world itself, he supposed, could not contain the books,—the last ember of the fire that burned so brilliantly in the Apocalypse. But in general the Gospel and Epistles are didactic, tender, persuasive. No one would conclude from them that their author was well described as a *son of thunder*. But our impression is, that in his early days, John had a character of great vigor. He was the son of a fisherman, and accustomed to the habits of a hard life; Matt. iv. 21. He was moved powerfully by the appeal of Jesus, when he called him at first, and *immediately* left the ship and followed him. His companion, for the most part, in his early labors as an apostle, was Peter; see Luke xxii. 8; Acts iii. 1, 11, and viii. 14; and they were both remarkable for their *boldness*, John as well as Peter, after they gained knowledge of the resurrection of their Master; Acts iv. 13, 29, 31. Such are the facts which the New Testament furnishes of the life and character of John. Now, suppose we were called on to sustain these views of John's character from his writings only, should we find sufficient in the Gospel and Epistles for that purpose? Would there not be something wanting? But if we suppose that John was the author of the Apocalypse, and that he wrote that book in the meridian of his days, and forty years, or nearly so, before he wrote the Gospel, then are not the

means supplied by his writings for concluding that he was, in the prime and meridian of his life, what his Lord described him to be — *a son of thunder*? Let the above considerations have the weight they justly deserve, and no more. We will now pass on to show, that there are sufficient points of resemblance between the Apocalypse and the undisputed writings of John to justify the conclusion that all were written by the same person.

There are a class of evidences to this fact, which we shall intentionally exclude from this place; not because they are not strong and conclusive in themselves, (for they are truly so,) but because, in the first place, we are not competent to present them; and, secondly, because they would not be so readily understood by the larger part of our readers: we mean the points of resemblance between the diction and phraseology of the Apocalypse and the Gospel and Epistles, in the language in which they were originally written. True, we have been told, what we have no doubt is correct, that there is quite a difference between the original Greek of the Apocalypse and that of John's other writings; that the former is inelegant and full of barbarisms, while the latter is much more pure and classical. But notwithstanding this fact, (and we allow it to its full extent,) there are still points of resemblance in the phraseology, which seem to render it quite certain that the Apocalypse was written by the same hand that wrote the Gospel and Epistles. So far as the Greek is concerned, however, we must be content to lose the advantage which the comparison would give us. We take the common English version; and under the disadvantages of a translation, in which many points of resemblance cannot be preserved which are seen in the original, we propose to show that there is sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that John was the author of the Apocalypse. We shall divide the instances of resemblance which we shall quote under the two heads of Diction and Metaphors.

1st. *Diction*. All Christendom knows that John uses the phrase

*logos*, or word, to signify a person, as follows : " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ;" John i. 1. " And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth ;" 14. This style of diction is peculiar to John. No other New Testament writer has it. See 1 John i. 1. " That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." See also v. 7, where Jesus is again called " the Word." Now, if we turn to the Apocalypse, we find the same phraseology there ; for in speaking of Jesus, the revelator says : " He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood ; and his name is called *the Word of God* ;" xix. 13. In no other part of the New Testament is *logos*, or word, used personally.

Another striking trait of resemblance is the fact, that the favorite expression of the Gospel, viz., *bearing witness*, for declaring of the Gospel, and *witness, record or testimony*, for the truth declared, is very common in the style of John. See John i. 7 ; iii. 11, 32, 33 ; v. 31—36 ; viii. 13, 14 ; xviii. 37 ; xxi. 24. Nothing is more common than this phraseology in the Gospel. See also 1 John v. 7—11. Turn now to the Apocalypse. Here the same phraseology prevails. The revelator " bears record of the word of God, and the testimony of Christ ;" i. 2. He was banished to Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Christ ; 9 ; the souls under the altar were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held ; vi. 9 ; and the saints overcame the accuser " by the word of their testimony ;" xii. 11, 17. See also xix. 10 ; xx. 4 ; xxii. 18, 20. In closing the Gospel John says, " This is the disciple who testifieth of these things ;" xxi. 24 ; in closing the Apocalypse he said, " He who testifieth these things saith," &c. ; xxii. 20. Taking all these instances together, we can hardly refrain from the conviction that one hand must have framed the

Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse. Out of John's works, there is scarcely any usage of this particular kind to be found.

Again. It was very common for John to use the word *hour* for time, or season, as "Mine hour is not yet come;" ii. 4; "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth;" 23; also, v. 25; vii. 30, &c. This is a prevailing idiom in the Apocalypse; iii. 3, 10; xiv. 7.

There is one fact in regard to the crucifixion that John only has recorded, viz., the piercing of the Saviour's side with a spear; xix. 34—37. To this he applies the prediction in Zechariah xii. 10, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." The only other instance in all the New Testament in which this fact is mentioned is Rev. i. 7. Does not this look very much like the same hand in both passages? There seems to be not only a recognition of the fact of the piercing of Jesus' side in both cases, but that they that pierced him should look on him. It is difficult to resist the conviction that both passages were written by the same person.

Another peculiarity of the Apocalypse is the use of the words *overcome* and *overcometh*, for successful perseverance in Christian duties in the midst of trials and dangers. For instance, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne;" iii. 21. See ii. 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12; xxi. 7. This is John's manner of speech. It appears strikingly in 1st Epis. ii. 13, 14; iv. 4; v. 4, 5. Let these cases suffice. We pass in the next place to consider

2nd. *Metaphors*. Jesus represented himself and his truth under the figure of light. John remembered this through his whole life. He incorporated it into the metaphors of the Apocalypse. Of the New Jerusalem he said, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof: and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it;" xxi. 23, 24.

See also xxii. 5; 1 John i. 7. According to John's gospel, how frequently Jesus represented himself and his truth under the figure of light; i. 4—9; iii. 19—21; viii. 12; xii. 46.

*Sons of God.* "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son;" Rev. xxi. 7. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" 1 John iii. 1. The same in the Gospel. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;" John i. 12.

The prevailing character in which Christ appears in the Apocalypse is that of a lamb; v. 6, 8, 12, 13; vi. 1, 16; vii. 9, 10, 14, 17; xii. 11; xiii. 8, 11; xiv. 1, 4, 10, &c., &c. This figure John mentions in his Gospel. See John i. 29, 36. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Besides the above there are but two other instances in the New Testament in which Christ is represented by the lamb, viz., Acts viii. 32; 1 Pet. i. 19. And the latter is so strictly the language of the Apocalypse, that one would think Peter must have seen that work before he wrote his epistle. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" Rev. xiii. 8. "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was preordained before the foundation of the world." We do not maintain it is certain that Peter quoted from the Apocalypse; but if he did not, there seems such a unity of expression as we could scarcely expect except between men familiar with each other's forms of speech; and it will be remembered that Peter and John were fellow-laborers.

The revelator represents the church as the bride, and Jesus as the bridegroom. See xxi. 2: "And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Ver. 9: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." See also xxii. 17. Now **this** metaphor occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except

in the gospel of John. The evangelist seems to have learned it originally from the Baptist. With his accustomed open-heartedness, the latter said, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him: he that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled;" John iii. 28. Here, unquestionably, Christ was the bridegroom; and the Baptist was the bridegroom's friend, who rejoiced to hear his voice. John was the only one of the evangelists who recorded this. Does it not tend to fortify the proof that John was the author of the Apocalypse?

Another very striking metaphor of the Apocalypse is that of *water*, to represent the truth and its influences. What beauty is there in the following description of the felicity of the redeemed! "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" Rev. vii. 17. Again: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely;" xxi. 6. Again: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" xxii. 17. These are to be ranked surely among the most beautiful metaphors of the book; and from whom did the author derive them? If he were John, we know very well from what source he obtained them. Let the reader turn to the 4th chapter of the Gospel of John, and peruse the account of our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria. See how strikingly he represented his doctrine by "living water," of which if the thirsty drank, they should thirst no more. It should be to them the source of everlasting life; iv. 10—14. See also vii. 37, 38. This event does not seem to have made the same deep impression upon the minds of the other evangelists that it did upon the

mind of John. He is the only one who recorded it; he is the only New Testament writer who has given the metaphor water a great significance as a representation of the truth in Jesus. And we regard this as another strong point of similarity between the style of the Apocalypse and that of the undisputed writings of John.

Still another metaphor of the Apocalypse is *manna*. This was the food from heaven, with which God miraculously fed the children of Israel on their forty years' journey through the wilderness. John is the only writer who uses it as a figure of divine truth. We find it in the Apocalypse: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna," (Rev. ii. 17,) that is, unseen by the outward eye. In the Gospel we learn that Jesus mentions the manna, as an article of temporal food, in connection with the bread of life, or the spiritual food of the Gospel. With the exception of Heb. ix. 4, where the pot of manna that was kept in the temple is referred to, the manna is mentioned in no other part of the New Testament, except the Gospel of John, and the Apocalypse.

There is no New Testament writer who has recorded, as John has, Christ's description of the gospel under the figure of food. The same figure is found in the Apocalypse: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna;" 17. This was the metaphor of Jesus, which John alone has preserved. According to that apostle, Jesus claimed that his doctrine was the true bread from heaven;" vi. 32. He was "the bread of God, which came down from heaven;" 33; the "living bread," of which, if a man eat, he should live forever; 51. The "tree of life in the paradise of God," is but another metaphor for the heavenly bread. Do not these facts form a link in the chain of proofs that John was the author of the Apocalypse?

There is no New Testament writer who has given that prominence that John has to the metaphor of *blood*, to represent the cleansing power of divine truth. There is scarce any mention of blood, in this sense, by any other writer. It is the purifying power of the truth to which John refers, when he says, "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one;" 1 John v. 8. Being "born of water and the spirit," John iii. 5, was being cleansed by divine truth. John further testifies, 1 Epis. i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." How often do we find this metaphor in the Apocalypse: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" i. 5. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" v. 9. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" vii. 14. Is there not a striking similarity between the style of the Apocalypse and the style of the undisputed writings of John?

Matthew records the words of Jesus, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;" v. 6. With this exception, John is the only evangelist who uses hunger and thirst as metaphors to represent the need which the human soul hath for the truth of Christ. The revelator says, of those who have entered the new Jerusalem, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat;" vii. 16. To this agrees the metaphor in John's Gospel: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst;" vi. 35.

We have thus brought to a close our remarks on the points of resemblance between the Apocalypse and the undisputed writings

of John. Many strong points may have been omitted. We have purposely avoided any comparisons in points of doctrine, because we believe that the New Testament writers all agree essentially with each other in those respects ; but if any one would take the labor to compare the manner in which the doctrine of judgment is stated in the Apocalypse with the manner in which it is stated in the Gospel of John, he would find a strong confirmation of the opinion we have expressed, viz., that the Apocalypse had an apostolic origin, and that it was written by John. Previously, however, to closing up entirely this part of our subject, we shall take time to notice several objections which have been urged against the hypothesis, that John was the author of the Apocalypse.

1. It is said, *the author of the Gospel and of the Epistles has not named himself, in a single instance, whereas the writer of the Apocalypse has named himself repeatedly.*

We cannot think this objection well founded. Is the case uncommon for men to avow themselves the authors of certain books, and to publish others anonymously ? and must we suppose, on that account, that they could not have been the authors both of the avowed works and the anonymous ? It seems to us this would be strange reasoning. We should remember that John was a much younger man when he wrote the Apocalypse than he was when he wrote the Gospel and Epistles ; and there may have been reasons unknown to us why he affixed his name to the first, and omitted it from the two last. Besides, although he has not named himself in the Gospel, he has described himself in such a manner, that the church from the beginning was never puzzled to know the author. We think the objection we have named has but very little weight.

2. It is also objected, *that although the author of the Apocalypse calls himself Jo'h'n, he does not show that he is the apostle of that name.*

And why needed he to state that, since he was preëminently *the*

JOHN of the church? If it had been any other John, it would have been necessary for him to have described himself more particularly, that he might not be mistaken by any person for him who was preëminently known by that name. When we speak of Washington, we do not need to add a circumlocution to show that we mean the first President of the United States; but if we spoke of some person of that name of less distinction, it would be necessary that we should show in some way what individual we meant. The fact, therefore, that the John who was the author of the Apocalypse simply gave his name, should weigh nothing against the presumption that he was the apostle.

3. It is said, *the Apocalypse does not mention the Epistle, nor the Epistle the Apocalypse.*

Is there any force in this objection? How could the writer of the Apocalypse name the catholic Epistle, since when the former was written the latter had not been even contemplated that we know of? And are we so sure that there was a necessity for John to name the Apocalypse in his subsequent writings as to conclude from the omission that he was not the author of it? Was it the custom of Paul, for instance, when he wrote an epistle, to name the works he had previously written? We all know that he did not do so. When he wrote a second time to the same church, it was very natural that he should name his first communication; but not when he wrote to different persons. As Dr. Lardner says, Paul in his epistle to the Romans was utterly silent in regard to all his epistles, although at the time he had written several.

4. Again, it is objected, *that there is a great resemblance in sentiment, manner and expression, between the Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John; but the Apocalypse is altogether different, without any affinity or resemblance whatever.*

In the first place, we remark, that this objection is founded on a false basis. It is not true that the Apocalypse is altogether different from the Gospel and Epistle, and without any affinity or

resemblance whatever. We have shown satisfactorily, we think, that, although there are strong points of difference between the Apocalypse and the undisputed writings of John, there are also strong points of resemblance. We can account for the points of difference consistently with the belief that John was the author of the Apocalypse; but on the ground that he was not the author, how can we account for the points of resemblance which we have described? In the first place, let it be remembered, that the Apocalypse was written (as we shall show) thirty or forty years before the Gospel and Epistles; and in that time John's mind may have lost somewhat of its vigor and soaring tendency. And it is worthy of remark, too, that the object of the Apocalypse required a different style from an epistle, or a history. The Gospel is a biographical history; the Epistles are didactic addresses; but the Apocalypse is a prophecy. The Apocalypse is in the style of the ancient prophecies; we should not of course expect it to be in the style of a history or epistle. We see, therefore, that the objection we have stated is without force.

But, 5, It is said, *the Gospel and Epistles of John are written in elegant Greek; but the writer of the Apocalypse proves that he had not an accurate knowledge of that language; on the contrary, the Apocalypse abounds with barbarisms and solecisms.*

Allowing to its full extent the allegation here made, viz., as to the different style of the Gospel and the Apocalypse, we are very far from thinking it proves that the same hand did not write both books. May not an author's style be very different at one time from what it is at another? We know that the style of a writer is sometimes greatly changed, even in a few years, by his associations or his studies. If it be borne in mind that the Apocalypse was written twenty or thirty years earlier than the Gospel, we shall see that there was time enough for John's style to be greatly changed between the writing of the two works. The Apocalypse was John's first production, and was written when he was not so much accustomed to the Greek language as he

became in after life. So that the objection above noticed has no force at all ; it utterly vanishes upon examination.

The last objection which we shall notice is

6. *That the Apocalypse is so obscure as to be unintelligible, and is therefore not proper to be called a revelation from God.*

If the allegation here were true, the objection might have some force. But it is not true ; the book is not unintelligible. As to the interpretation, the difficulty has existed more in the minds of men than in the book itself. There is no book, let it be remembered, in the Bible, that has been so much perverted as this. Men have almost exhausted their powers of conception in contriving meanings for it. The wild and enthusiastic have given a loose rein to their imaginations in respect to it. The book has been too much given up into their hands. It has been buried, we had almost said, beneath the load of strange and contradictory interpretations which have been given of it. But we maintain this is more the fault of men than of the book. Of late we have seen a class who have been so fully persuaded the Apocalypse cannot be understood, that they have not sought to understand it. Would it not be well to make an honest attempt first, before they pass so rash a decision against a portion of the word of God ? One great bar to the proper understanding of the book has been the mistake that has prevailed in regard to its date. If men settle down in the impression that the Apocalypse was not written until about the year A. D. 96, — a quarter of a century after the destruction of Jerusalem, — we see not how they can either rationally interpret it, or suppose it to have been written by John. That section of the book included in chapters vi. — xi. is so manifestly a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, that if we supposed the work were written after that event, we should not have any facts to guide us in the interpretation. Place the date of the book previously, and many difficulties are at once solved.

To understand the Apocalypse, a person must learn to apply

metaphors by the help of the Old Testament. He must study diligently to learn how the prophets used them. This of all helps is the best. And if an honest inquirer after Bible truth will, in the first place, prepare himself in this manner, he will see many difficulties vanish, which at first appeared to him insurmountable; and although he may not understand every part, he will understand enough to repay him richly for all his pains. We do not suppose that we can now understand the book as well as those to whom it was originally addressed; nor do we think it can do us as much good as perhaps it did them. But by the help of other parts of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, it may become profitable to us, and is therefore worthy of our serious attention and regard.

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## SECOND ESSAY.

### THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

#### I. — PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

ONE of the most important questions concerning the Apocalypse is, at what time was it written? It is generally supposed to have been written by St. John the apostle, although there are not wanting those who incline to a different opinion. If written by him, (which has been inquired into in another place,) it must have been done sometime between the crucifixion of our Lord and the death of the apostle. The principal matter of interest is, was it written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem? If not written until after that event, it seems to form an exception to all the books of the New Testament which treat of the fall of that city. The warnings, the metaphors, which occur in the other

parts of the New Testament, and which are unquestionably applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, occur also in the Apocalypse; and we have no help from any part of the New Testament in the application of these warnings and metaphors, unless the Apocalypse was written previously to that event. The question, then, as to the date, is one of great interest, and cannot too closely engage the attention of any person who desires to understand the book.

The learned editor of the "Universalist Expositor" published an article on the Apocalypse, in which, although it occupies less than a dozen pages of that work, he treats of the three highly important topics, the authenticity, the date, and the meaning. When he comes to the second topic, he says,

"Admitting, then, that St. John was probably the author of the Apocalypse, when was it written? Were we to judge solely from the allusions of the book itself, we should answer, at once, before the destruction of Jerusalem; but if from the balance of mere historical testimony, such as it is, we should place its date after that event, and about the year 96. This testimony, however, is not of the most unquestionable character. Eusebius, in the fourth century, is the first to mention the time of St. John's banishment to Patmos, where he saw the Revelation; and he refers it, on what authority we know not, to the reign of Domitian, and adds that he was liberated on the accession of the emperor Nerva, which took place A. D. 96. There is indeed an ambiguous passage in an earlier and more competent witness, Irenæus, which has been generally understood to authenticate this statement, and to assert that the Revelation was seen at the end of Domitian's reign: but Wetstein and Rosenmuller contend that the language relates to the time when St. John himself lived, and not to the period of his vision. These are all the historical notices concerning the date of the book which are of any importance, for the statements of Jerome are probably founded on those of Eusebius; and as to

the contrary representations sometimes quoted from Epiphanius, who refers it back to about the year 50, nobody acquainted with the romancing habit of this writer ought to attach the least weight to them." So far the editor of the *Expositor*. He evidently inclined to the opinion that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem; but he allowed that the balance of historical testimony would place it about A. D. 96.

As to the relative weight which is to be given to the balance of historical testimony, on the one side, or the indications as to the date of the Apocalypse, which we find in the book itself, on the other, we decide in favor of the latter. The one is the undesigned testimony afforded by the writer himself; the other is that of other men, living at a distance of time from him, liable to be misinformed, to misunderstand language, and to mislead many others. Thus, the testimony of one man, having no very strong ground himself, perhaps, for the correctness of his opinion, goes by tradition, or record, to others, who help to swell the number of authors in defence of some position; and yet, after all, we have the testimony of only one man; and that we have, not from his own lips, or pen, but from the repetitions of others. We feel, therefore, a much stronger confidence in the internal evidences which the Apocalypse furnishes of its date, than we do in the historical testimony. It is for this reason, we think, that the number of those who believe that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem is steadily increasing, among men of sound learning. Professor Stuart has added the weight of his great learning and influence to the support of that opinion. Some few years ago, in his work entitled "*Hints on Prophecy*," he showed very clearly that the internal evidences proved the book to have been written previously to the fall of Jerusalem; and in his more recent and larger work on the Apocalypse, he has expressed the opinion more fully and decidedly. It is highly probable that as the true intent of that book is more and

more developed, the opinion will become more generally embraced.<sup>1</sup>

## II. — HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

In respect to the historical testimony, the first thing which strikes the mind of the inquirer is, that it is contradictory. Irenæus, who is the most ancient authority we have upon the subject, seemed to think that the Apocalypse made its appearance about the end of Domitian's reign, say A. D. 95. Epiphanius said repeatedly that John wrote the Revelation during the time of Claudius, the predecessor of Nero; and if this be true, it must have been written before A. D. 54. Tertullian, and after him Jerome, are supposed to have taught, that John was banished to Patmos during the reign of Nero; and in the Syriac version of the Apocalypse, the title-page explicitly declares, that it was written in Patmos, whither *John was sent by Nero Cæsar*. If the Apocalypse was written during the reign of Nero, it was but a few years before the Jewish war; and it would render very natural the language of that book in respect to the immediateness of the threatened judgments.

1 See "Hints on Prophecy," 2d Edit., Andover, 1842, pp. 108—151, especially pp. 111—113; and also his large work on the Apocalypse, vol. i., 263—282. Among other writers who have supposed the book to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, may be mentioned Sir Isaac Newton, in his "Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John;" London, 1733; Dr. Hammond, in his Commentary; the learned Lightfoot's works, (edited by J. R. Pitman, London, 1825,) vol. iii., pp. 331—371, and various other places; Bp. Thomas Newton, in his Dissertations on the Prophecies, London, 1832, pp. 444—447; and to these we are told we may add the authorities of Grotius, Wetstein, Eichorn, and many other learned men. The opinion is now becoming more and more general, that the Apocalypse was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. Dr. Adam Clarke, in closing his notes on the Apocalypse, says, "I think the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and not in 95 or 96, the date I follow in the margin; which date I give, not as my own opinion, but the opinion of others."—[See the paragraph at the end of his Commentary on the New Testament.]

Irenæus, it will be remembered, did not live until about a century after St. John. The language of that father does not seem to be intended to define the time when the Apocalypse was written, so much as the time of its first appearance so far as he knew. The words are these: "The Apocalypse was seen, not long ago, but almost in our generation, near the end of Domitian's reign." Supposing Irenæus here to have intended that the Apocalypse, so far as he knew, did not appear until near the end of Domitian's reign, would this prove that it was not written until that time? or that none others had seen it until then? We think not. The passage quoted from Irenæus is evidently ambiguous; some authors take one view of it, and some another. Whether he meant that John had his vision near the end of Domitian's reign, or that the Apocalypse first came to light at that time, so far as he knew, we cannot tell. If the latter, it is entirely consistent with the fact asserted on the title-page of the Syriac version, viz., that John was banished to Patmos in the time of Nero. Eusebius, who lived about one hundred years after Irenæus, has left the same testimony; but he evidently quoted from him. As to the assertion of Epiphanius, that John wrote the Revelation during the reign of Claudius, all the critics speak lightly of his authority, except Hammond, who thinks there are strong reasons for believing him. Epiphanius contended with the Montanists, who maintained, against the credibility of the book of Revelation, that there was no church at Thyatira at the time the Apocalypse was said to have been written. Epiphanius, therefore, was under a temptation, if we may so speak, to put the date later rather than earlier than others. In placing it in the reign of Claudius, therefore, he must have stated what he believed to be true, because his success with the Montanists would have been subserved if he had placed it later.

To sum up the historical testimony, "It is plain that an ancient tradition existed, and was propagated through succeeding

ages, that the Apocalypse was seen near the close of Domitian's reign, i. e., about A. D. 95, for Domitian died in September of 96." When such a report originated is not known, though Irenæus seems to have been the first who recorded it. The testimony of Epiphanius places the date of the Apocalypse in the reign of Claudius; but he is not thought to be good authority, except by Hammond, who states several reasons why he is to be relied on. Again, there are fragments of history which fix the date in the time of Nero; and these are strengthened by the declaration on the title-page of the Syriac version, that the Apocalypse was written during the reign of Nero Cæsar. The result is that no great dependence can be placed upon the historical testimony. There are sound modern critics both on the one side and the other. Among those who suppose the book was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, may be mentioned Grotius, Lightfoot, Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Bp. Newton, Wetstein, and Prof. Stuart of Andover,—an array of talent that is sufficient to give to any opinion great weight. But the safer way, after all, whereby to determine the question before us, is by the help of the internal evidence.

### III. — INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

The single question which we shall seek to settle now is, Was the Apocalypse written before the destruction of Jerusalem?

1. Let it be observed that it was addressed to the seven churches in Asia. We are not sure that these churches only were addressed. They may have been used symbolically for the churches at large, *seven* being separated as a sample of the whole, for the same reason that John speaks of the seven spirits, the seven lamps of fire, seven seals, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, &c. &c. But however this may be, it seems evident that the churches addressed were regarded as being on the eve of great dangers, as though a crisis in their affairs was very near

Some of them are represented as having begun to grow cold, to waver, to faint; and they are exhorted to steadfastness and renewed exertions, that they might overcome all opposition, and have their names inscribed in the temple of God, the New Jerusalem. See chaps. ii. and iii. at large. Now, is not this almost precisely the form of address, exhortation, and warning, adopted by the apostles to other churches, in regard to the coming of Christ and the attending judgments? Is there any hint, in the address to the seven churches, that the judgment had taken place? Does not the revelator look *forward* to the judgment? Had the destruction of Jerusalem already taken place when he addressed the churches, — that terrible event, which was a time of trouble such as there had not been from the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be, — can we suppose he would have passed it by without drawing some warning from it, or passed it by without any reference whatsoever? But the special point to be observed, under this head of our subject, is, that the style of address to the churches of Asia does not differ greatly from that of the epistles of Paul and Peter. The revelator urges the church at Ephesus to labor to overcome their enemies, — to sustain themselves well in the midst of persecutions; and Paul surely urges the same thing in substance on the same church. He exhorted them to be “strong in the Lord and the power of his might;” to “put on the whole armor of God,” &c. &c.; because they were obliged to wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, &c. Here is such a state of this church recognized by both writers as would lead us to think the two addresses were written not far from the same time. It is alleged by some writers that no such falling away had taken place in the seven churches of Asia, before the destruction of Jerusalem, as is described by the revelator. But does not St. Paul assure the Thessalonians, that the coming of Christ should not take place, except there came a falling away first? and that the man of sin, the son of

perdition, should be fully revealed before that event? This would lead us to think that the apostasy in the churches did take place before Jerusalem was destroyed. Paul says also to Timothy, that in the last days [viz., the last days of the Jewish dispensation] perilous times should come, men should be filled with self-love, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, &c. Here he was describing the apostasy of Christians, because he adds that such had "a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof," and exhorts the faithful to turn away from them. Why, then, should it be denied, that the churches of Asia had not been visited with signs of coldness before the destruction of Jerusalem? Were they not as likely to be carried away as the churches addressed by Paul and Peter? That the churches had begun to falter under the weight of persecutions before the destruction of Jerusalem, is further evident from the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, (for he is faithful that promised,) and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and good works: not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, *as ye see the day approaching*. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth," &c., &c.; Heb. x. 23—26; also, 38, 39. Precisely the same state of the churches is described in the 2d Epistle of Peter with that described in the Apocalypse. It is such, it would almost seem, that these two books were written about the same time; and the same remark may be made in regard to the brief epistle of Jude. St. Peter speaks at large of the falling away which was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem; 2d Pet. ii., iii. Peter accuses the churches of pride, presumption, adultery, and following the way of Balaam; and these are precisely the sins charged upon them by the revelator. The church at Laodicea is charged with being proud and presumptu-

ous. She said, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;" but, says the revelator, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" iii. 17. As to the sin of adultery, the revelator accused the church at Thyatira of consorting with Jezebel, who taught God's servants to offend; and the malediction was, "I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds;" ii. 22. As to following the way of Balaam, mentioned by Peter, the comparison with the revelator's reference to that circumstance is peculiarly striking: "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication;" ii. 14. We may therefore safely conclude, that if the 2d Epistle of Peter was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, the churches were in the precise state at that time in which the revelator describes them. And there is still another point of resemblance; the revelator exhorts the churches to stand firm against persecutions, and not to be *overcome* by the temptations and trials in which they were involved. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death;" ii. 11. See also 17, 26—28; iii. 5, 12, 21; in all which places the advantages of *overcoming* in the spiritual conflict in which the churches were engaged are set forth. To the same subject refers St. Peter. Speaking of the faltering and falling of the Christians, he said: "Of whom a man is *overcome*, of the same is he brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and *overcome*, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them;" 2 Pet. ii. 19—21.

2. Let us turn now to another point. All the signs which our Lord said would precede the destruction of Jerusalem are mentioned in the Apocalypse; but, as we should expect, they are mentioned in the style of that book. These were wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, fearful sights, persecutions of Christians, and preaching the gospel everywhere; to which may be added the coming in of false teachers and the apostasy of some lukewarm professors, two points which have been already noticed. Let us look at the other points as noticed in the Apocalypse.

*War.* “And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse, that was *red*; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.”

*Famine.* “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” This is evidently a description of famine, when it became necessary to weigh out the common articles of food with great exactness, and the wages of a man would scarcely buy bread enough for himself alone.

*Pestilence.* “And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, (the sign of weakness and fainting,) and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell (or destruction) followed with him,” and he had more than all the power of the rest. Thus, in a few verses taken consecutively, we find a description, in the style of the Apocalypse, of wars, pestilence, and famine, — all of which had been foretold by our Lord as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

As to *earthquakes*, how frequently do we read of them in the

Apocalypse, especially in that part of it which treats of the destruction of Jerusalem. Whether our Lord, in foretelling the signs that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, mentioned earthquakes in the literal or metaphorical sense, we will not tarry here to inquire, because those convulsions are probably spoken of in both senses by the revelator. How sublime is the metaphor that opens under the sixth seal. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake ; \* \* \* \* and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains," &c. ; vi. 12, 15. In chapter viii. 5, the tumults are described by voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake : and again, in xi. 13, where the revelator winds up that portion of the Apocalypse which seems to treat of the destruction of Jerusalem, he says, "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand." In the next place our Lord mentioned

*Fearful sights and signs in heaven.* Is not this the language of the Apocalypse also ? The sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair ; the moon turns to blood ; the stars fall from heaven like the figs from a tree shaken by a mighty wind, and the heavens depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. If it be alleged that this language was metaphorical, whereas the Saviour intended fearful sights in a literal view, we reply that it is no more certain that the language of the Saviour is to be construed strictly to the letter than the language of the revelator.

*The persecution of the Christians* is represented by our Lord as one of the signs that denoted the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. This was a thing so continually occurring, from the beginning of our Lord's ministry until all the apostles were dead, and even for centuries afterward, that it gives no definite indication. But this much may be relied upon, that immediately pre-

ceding the fall of the Jews, it was a season of very violent persecution of the church, not only in Judea, but throughout all parts of the Roman empire. And nothing is more plain than that the Apocalypse was written in the time of a great persecution. The churches are exhorted to have patience, to hold fast their faith, to prepare for trials; they are told that they shall be cast into prison, but are encouraged to be "faithful unto death." The martyrs under the altar, who were slain for the word of God, and the testimony they held, cry unto God for vengeance, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth?" Does not this show that the deaths of these Jewish-Christian martyrs, whose souls were represented as lying in the temple, under the altar, were not yet avenged? But they were to be avenged by the destruction of the Jews. Our Lord said that upon *that generation* should be visited all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, *All these things shall come upon this generation.* And that the destruction of the city is referred to among the judgments seems evident from the Redeemer's lamentation, which immediately followed: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee," &c., &c.; Matt. xxiii. 34—37. If, then, the blood of the Jewish-Christian martyrs was unavenged when the Apocalypse was written, must it not have been written before the lamented city fell?

We might mention other signs which were pointed out by our Lord as presaging the destruction of Jerusalem, but we have no more room to devote to this topic, and we have already considered the principal. Now, if all the signs named by our Lord as marking the approach of the destruction of Jerusalem are referred to in the Apocalypse, and restated and reaffirmed in the

peculiar style of that book, as marking an event still future, but close at hand, are we not led with a high degree of probability to the conclusion, that the Apocalypse was written before the fall of Jerusalem? And let it be added, that all these signs are found in that part of the Apocalypse which is supposed to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, by those who believe the book to have been written previously to that event.

3. But there is another very strong argument in favor of our position, built on the agreement of the language of the Apocalypse on the one side, and that of all the other books of the New Testament on the other, in respect to the time and circumstances of our Lord's coming. In the Apocalypse we are told, even in the very first verse of it, that the things foretold were "*shortly to come to pass.*" Again, verse 3, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : *for the time is at hand.*" See also ii. 16 ; iii. 11, and xi. 14. But at the close of the book, as well as at the beginning, the Christians were warned again, that the old dispensation would very speedily pass away ; that the New Jerusalem was about to come down from God out of heaven, and that the coming of the Son of man was about to take place. "Behold I come quickly ; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book ;" xxii. 7. "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand ;" verse 10. "And behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ;" verse 12. Again, verse 20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." A person well versed in the language of the New Testament respecting the coming of Christ cannot fail to be impressed with its agreement with that of the Apocalypse. There are two facts to be observed here : 1st. The immediateness of the coming of Christ ; and, 2d, the rewarding of men according to their works in connection with it. "I come quickly ; and my re-

ward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." When our Lord foretold his coming to destroy the Jews, he said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels; *and then he shall reward every man according to his works.* Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Matt. xvi. 27, 28. It seems difficult to entertain a doubt that the Lord refers to the same coming in the Apocalypse, (for the words are represented as coming from the mouth of Jesus,) which Matthew here describes. The event was nearer when the Apocalypse was written than when our Lord was on earth. The language in the Apocalypse, therefore, differs so much from that given by Matthew as the event was nearer when the revelator wrote. In addition to the quotations from Matthew, see Mark viii. 38, and ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27; and John xxi. 21, 22.

If we examine the epistles, we shall find a language somewhat different from that of our Lord, because the event of his coming was much nearer than when he spoke. Jesus said it shall come in this generation; James said, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" v. 8. The writer to the Hebrews said to his brethren, "Ye see the day approaching." Peter, who wrote his 2d Epistle still later, bears testimony that his brethren were "looking for and hasting unto the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" iii. 12. This was the passing away of the old heaven and earth, to give place to the new heaven and new earth, which John saw, as it were, coming down from God out of heaven. Some became tired in waiting for the coming of Christ, and the scoffers said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The apostles found it necessary, therefore, to exhort Christians to patience 'Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the

earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" James v. 7, 8. The time of the coming of the Lord is also represented as the end of the world, or age; 1 Cor. x. 11. "The end of all things;" 1 Pet. iv. 7. To this the revelator agrees; for if we follow him carefully, we shall find, that after he has described, in his peculiar manner, what *we* take to be the wonders and signs that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, and as he approaches the great catastrophe of the Jews, he introduces a mighty angel, bearing the marks of the Son of man, who put one foot on the sea, and the other on the land, and lifting up his hand to heaven, swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, "that there should be time no longer;" x. 6. Does not this exactly agree with the general language of the New Testament concerning the destruction of Jerusalem? Do we read of any other event in the New Testament to which this can so well apply? To what shall we apply it, if not to that event?

Having thus looked at the time of Christ's coming at the destruction of the Jews, let us look, in the next place, at the circumstances attending it. With what pomp, with what circumstance, did the revelator describe the coming of Christ? We will listen: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him;" i. 7. This is precisely as our Lord himself described his coming to overthrow the Jews. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Can we resist the conviction that the revelator spoke of the same event with our Lord? If the revelator's description does not refer to the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, to what event does it refer? Observe, there are three points of

resemblance : 1st. Christ cometh in the clouds of heaven. 2d. Every eye shall see him. 3d. All the kindreds of the earth shall mourn because of him. All three of these facts are stated in both passages. It is demonstrated that our Lord referred in his description to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem ; for he adds, immediately, " Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." These words the revelator would not naturally have used, because the event was so near ; but he supplies in the place of them the admonition, " The time is at hand." We ask again, on the strength of this argument, was not the Apocalypse written before the destruction of Jerusalem ?

But there are other facts to be considered. Nothing is more plain than that Jesus foretold, that when his coming should take place, the kingdom of God should be fully established. " Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power ;" Mark ix. 1. Luke's language is similar : " I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God ;" ix. 27. All the New Testament writers looked forward to the establishment of the kingdom of God as near. They spoke of it in almost every form of phraseology. Now, if the revelator spake of that great event as being near at hand, it would seem to show conclusively that he wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the eleventh chapter, in which the revelator brings up his description of the troubles of the Jews to their climax, he says, " The second woe is past ; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded, [the last of the series, for there was no eighth or ninth angel,] and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And to this he adds, " And the four and twenty elders, which sat before

God, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast *taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned ;*" xi. 14—17. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that the revelator spoke of the same event to which our Lord referred ? The kingdom of God came with power, when the kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Are we not justified, then, in the conclusion that the Apocalypse was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem ?

Turn we to another fact. Jesus promised his disciples that "In the regeneration, when the Son of man should sit on the throne of his glory, they also should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel ;" Matt. xix. 28. This metaphor of reigning with Christ is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him ; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him, he also will deny us ;" 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Now, as to the point of Christians reigning with their Master, the revelator treats of it frequently. They reigned when he reigned ; they came to power when he came to power. Jesus told them, when they saw the signs of his coming, to lift up their heads, for their redemption then would be nigh. What does the revelator say about this matter of reigning with Christ ? "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne ;" iii. 21. Hence the early Christians were said to be made "kings and priests unto God ;" Rev. i. 6 ; and when they sung the new song, they said, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth ;" v. 9, 10. The Gospel reign began in its full power at the destruction of Jerusalem ; and the reference which we find in the Apocalypse to

Christians being exalted to reign with Christ, as a future event, proves that the destruction of Jerusalem was future when the book was written.

But we pass from this topic. There is another subject, bearing a close relation, which it will be proper to introduce here. Our Lord repeatedly stated, that, at the time of his coming, he should judge the nations of the earth. The time of his coming was preëminently a time of judgment. He foretold, that when the Son of man should come in his glory, he should sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him should be assembled all nations, and he should render to every man according to his works; Matt. xxv. 31, and xvi. 27, 28. Because the event was very near when St. James wrote, he said, "Behold the Judge standeth before the door;" v. 9. St. Paul said, that Jesus should "judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing and kingdom*;" 2 Tim. iv. 1; and St. Peter said, that men must give account to him "that is ready to judge the quick and the dead;" 1 Pet. iv. 5. There will be no dispute, then, that the judgment of the nations was to take place at the time of the coming of the Son of man at the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, it is very plainly to be seen, that the revelator spoke of the same judgment as transpiring in the course of the events that *he* described. At the sounding of the seventh angel, (as we have shown,) it was announced, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever;" and to this it is added, "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth." And then, as though the old temple were destroyed simultaneously with this judgment, the revelator adds, in the next words, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in

his temple the ark of his testament ;” i. e., the spiritual temple of the Gospel was to be opened in place of the temple on Mount Zion, which was about to pass away ; Rev. xi. 18. Now, as the revelator foretold this great judgment as about to take place in connection with the establishment of the kingdom of God, is not this an additional proof that the Apocalypse was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem ?

4. We approach now another class of evidences, which may perhaps be regarded as a little more direct ; and yet they do not possess to our mind any greater force than those which we have already submitted.

THE JEWS are spoken of in the Apocalypse in such a manner as would lead us to conclude that the book was written before the destruction of their city. “ Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which *pierced him* ;” i. 7. Here is a manifest reference to the Jews among whom, and at whose instigation, the Lord Jesus was crucified. They were involved, according to this passage, in the judgment described by the revelator, and which was then shortly to transpire. Could the revelator have said this, had not the Apocalypse been written before the destruction of Jerusalem ? But again : In the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse, the twelve tribes are spoken of as still being in existence ; and for the purpose of representing the Jews who had been converted to Christianity, and received the acknowledgment of God that they were his, the revelator describes twelve thousand persons as being selected from each tribe, who received the seal of God in their foreheads, that they might not be hurt in the approaching calamities. The threatened judgment seems to have been delayed, that all possible preparation for the security of the Christians, amid the coming dangers, might be made, — a circumstance which the revelator describes in his own style : “ And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the

four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." The number of those that were sealed was one hundred and forty-four thousand, "of all the tribes of the children of Israel." The tribes mentioned were the tribes of Juda, of Reuben, of Gad, of Aser, of Nephtholim, of Manasses, of Simeon, of Levi, of Issachar, of Zabulon, of Joseph, of Benjamin. Here is so plain a reference to the tribes as existing at the time, that one would consider it as decisive of the question that the book must have been written before the destruction of the nation. To this it may be said, in reply, that the revelator was perhaps contemplating the tribes retrospectively. But such a supposition conflicts with the plan of the Apocalypse; and moreover, the fourth chapter, which begins the second great division of that book, opens by saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be *hereafter*." The tribes did not exist as such, after the dissolution of the nation. And why should these tribes have been mentioned in the manner pointed out, if Judea were not involved in the judgment? Why should Jewish Christians alone be mentioned? We confess we know of no answer that can be given to these queries.

We find also references in the Apocalypse to the CITY OF JERUSALEM as still standing, at the time that book was written. Speaking of the two witnesses who had been slain for the testimony of Jesus, the revelator says, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified;" xi. 8. It was a custom with the sacred writers to call one city by the name of another, to signify some point of resemblance. Thus Jerusalem was called *Sodom*, after the example of Isaiah i. 10, on account of its wickedness; and it was also called *Egypt*, perhaps for the same reason. It was spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, i. e., it was called so figuratively or metaphorically. But

to set aside all question that Jerusalem was intended, see the revelator's adjunct, "where also our Lord was crucified." The bodies of the witnesses, then, were to lie in the streets of Jerusalem. But how could this be, if the city had been destroyed? And further on in the description the revelator said, that after three days the spirit of life entered into the witnesses, and they stood upon their feet, and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them; "and *the same hour* was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell," &c., &c. This is the same city, viz., "where our Lord was crucified;" and how could the revelator have prophesied in this manner, had he not written before the destruction of Jerusalem?

Closely allied to this argument is the one which is founded on the mention of THE TEMPLE in the Apocalypse. As the revelator draws towards the final catastrophe of the Jews, (on our plan of interpreting the Apocalypse,) after the mighty angel had sworn there should be time no longer, he surveyed the temple doomed to destruction. And as it had been carefully measured and laid out when it was built, as described in the prophecy of Ezekiel, so now is it to be measured preparatory to its destruction. Hence says the revelator, "There was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Our Lord himself had said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles;" Luke xxi. 24. To the outer court, called "the court of the Gentiles," they had always had access, and consequently there was no need of measuring that; but the holy temple, and especially the area of the altar, had not been profaned by Gentile feet. They are now to be given up to destruction, as well as the people who worshipped before that holy shrine. "Rise and measure the temple of

God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." Does not the revelator speak here of the temple as standing in his day? If so, must not the Apocalypse have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem? The efforts of Titus razed the holy building to the ground. Not one stone was left upon another. How, then, can any person explain the revelator's commission to measure the temple, if he wrote after its utter demolition?

But do we not find prophecies in the Apocalypse of the very event — the DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM? Does not the revelator quote the very language applied by our Lord to that event? his identical metaphors? Our Lord had said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, [he had been speaking of the wars, pestilences, and famines,] shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." He thus described the fall of the Jewish powers. And what saith the revelator? "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell to the earth," &c. &c. The terrified victims of these judgments cried, as the revelator described it, "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;" and this also is quoted from a passage of our Lord, in which he was speaking of the judgment that would come on the Jews. For when the Jewish women bewailed and lamented him, as he was led forth to crucifixion, he said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, &c. &c. Then shall they say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." How can we, then, avoid the conviction, that the figures employed by the revelator in the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse were designed by him to be applied to the fall of the Jews, and the overthrow of their city? After our Lord had said

(as recorded in the twenty-fourth of Matthew) that the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light, &c. &c., and that *then* should appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, — the next particular to which he adverted is the gathering together of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. And it is remarkable that the revelator, after having described the changes in the sun, moon, and stars, (evidently copying our Lord's metaphors,) proceeded in the next place to describe the sealing of God's elect; and the four winds are commanded to be still, and to blow not on the earth, until the process of sealing was fully completed. There is such an agreement here between our Lord and his servant who wrote the Apocalypse, that we cannot resist the conviction that they were both speaking of the same event.

5. The time of writing the Apocalypse, as certain writers have supposed, can be determined with a considerable degree of certainty, by the references to the Roman emperors which we find therein. In describing the judgment of Rome, the seven-hilled city, the revelator says: "There are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition;" xvii. 10, 11. Rome was represented by the harlot, who sat on the beast; and the beast represented the empire. This we shall take for granted in this place; and refer the reader to the commentary on that passage. During the revelator's lifetime, there was no city but Rome that could be thought to correspond to his description in the seventeenth chapter. "Besides, (says Prof. Stuart,) in ver. 9, the seven heads of the beast are said to symbolize 'the seven hills on which the woman sitteth,' i. e., the seven hills on which Rome was built, the *Septicollis Roma* of the Latin writers. There is no room for mistake here; and as little room, it seems to me, is there for mistake in another part

of the same explanatory chapters, viz., ver. 10. Here it is said that the seven heads of the beast also symbolize seven kings, viz., of Rome. The writer proceeds: 'Five are fallen; one is; the other has not yet come, but when he shall come, he will remain but for a short time.' That the Roman emperors were usually styled βασιλεις by the Greeks, needs no proof. That the line or succession of emperors is here meant, and not the primitive kings of Rome, is certain from the connection of the five with the one *who is*, and the one *who is to come*. We have only to reckon, then, the succession of emperors, and we must arrive with certainty at the reign under which the Apocalypse was written. If we begin with Julius Cæsar, it stands thus: Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius; these make up the five who had fallen. Of course the Apocalypse was written during the reign of Nero, who is the sixth. [And this, it will be remembered, is the fact which is asserted on the title-page of the Syriac version of the Apocalypse.] If, with some critics, we commence with Augustus, then the Apocalypse was written during the short reign of Galba, who succeeded Nero." In counting the Roman emperors, only an occasional beginning with Augustus can be shown in classic authors. The almost universal usage is against it. The probability on other grounds is against beginning with Augustus. Every part of the Apocalypse shows that persecution was raging and instant when the book was written. But this could not be true, at most, but a few days after Nero's death, for the persecution was not continued under his successor. Besides, when the writer adverts to the shortness of time in which the seventh king would reign, (which fits Galba especially, as he reigned but seven months,) why, in case he wrote during the reign of Galba, should he overlook the shortness of *his* reign, and advert in this respect merely to the succeeding reign of Otho? There is, moreover, a plain reference, in Rev. xiii. 10, to the *future* death of Nero, as well as to his then present cruelties. "He that leadeth

into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword." All this agrees very well with the time of Nero, but not with that of Galba. But at all events, which side soever of this dispute we take, it must be allowed that the Apocalypse was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, for that calamity did not take place until the reign of Vespasian. Some writers have maintained, as Eichorn and Bleek, that the last-named was the sixth emperor. Such begin with Augustus, and omit the three who reigned so briefly, viz., Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. They count as follows: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian. Although we think the arrangement which makes Nero the sixth, has by far the strongest proof in its favor, yet even this last would be consistent with the supposition that the Apocalypse was written previously to the fall of Jerusalem. But if we suppose it not to have been written until the reign of Domitian, how shall we make out that only five emperors had fallen? The Apocalypse was certainly written in the reign of the sixth emperor; and on what principle the sixth can be proved to have been Domitian, we cannot see. The weight of evidence is altogether in favor of the supposition that Nero was the sixth; and as this agrees with the declaration on the title-page of the Syriac version, that John was banished during the reign of Nero, which shows what was the current opinion in the East, we rest with no small confidence in the belief that that opinion was correct.

6. Sir Isaac Newton has advanced the supposition, which, he says, "to considering men may seem a good reason, to others not," viz., that the Apocalypse seems to be alluded to in the epistles of Peter, and in that to the Hebrews. He mentions the following subjects in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which seem to have been drawn from the Apocalypse, viz., the sharp two-edged sword; the *σαββατισμος*, or millennial rest; the earth whose end is to be burned; the judgment and fiery indignation that shall

devour the adversaries ; the heavenly city which hath foundations the cloud of witnesses ; Mount Zion ; the heavenly Jerusalem ; the general assembly, and the church of the first-born ; the shaking of the heaven and earth, that the new heaven and new earth which cannot be shaken may remain. In the first of Peter occurs the expression, "The revelation of Jesus Christ," twice or thrice repeated ; and Peter also makes mention of the church at Babylon, which it seems difficult to account for, unless we suppose him to have used the name after the manner of the revelator. Sir Isaac further supposes that the sure word of prophecy, referred to in the 2d Epistle of Peter, was the prophecy of the revelator. It must be confessed that there is a remarkable agreement between the contents of that Epistle, after mention is made of "the sure word of prophecy," and the contents of the Apocalypse. In fact, in one place, Peter seems to be fearful that the Christians would not watch diligently for the coming of their Lord, because the revelator had spoken of the intervention of a thousand years before the establishment of the New Jerusalem ; and he proceeds to say, "that the heavens and the earth which are now by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." And, apparently through fear that they would not expect to live to see this day, on account of some impression they had, from divine authority, that a thousand years were to pass away before these events should happen, he bids them remember "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ;" 2 Peter, iii. 8 ; "that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance ;" that the day of the Lord should come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise ; which seems to agree quite nearly with what the revelator said should happen after the thousand years had expired,

viz., "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them;" Rev. xx. 11. The revelator then proceeds to speak of the judgment of the dead, small and great; after which, he tells us, that the New Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven, and that the tabernacle of God is with men, referring to the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. And in the same manner Peter, after he had mentioned the thousand years, and insisted, notwithstanding this term had been used, still the day was near, and would come as a thief, and the heavens and earth that then were should pass away, proceeds to say, that nevertheless he looked, agreeably to the promise of God, for "new heavens and a new earth," wherein dwelleth righteousness. These answer to the New Jerusalem, seen by John, in which God would dwell with men, and there should be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. It seems to us very probable, from the comparison here instituted between the Epistle of Peter and the Apocalypse, that the latter was written before the former. Nero began to reign A. D. 54. The two Epistles of Peter are supposed to have been written about ten or eleven years after this; so that a sufficient time did elapse after Nero came to the throne, and before the Epistles of Peter were written, for that emperor to banish John to Patmos, for John to write the Apocalypse there, and for the Christians to get a knowledge of it.

7. There are other circumstances which serve to confirm the impression that the Apocalypse could not have been written so late as the reign of Domitian, and near the end of his reign, as Irenæus hath it. That emperor ceased to reign in A. D. 96; and hence we are told that the Apocalypse was written about 95 or 96. But how old was John at that date? (for it is allowed by those who adhere to this date that John was the author of the book.) We suppose he could not have been far from the age of our Lord. But allowing that he was somewhat younger, say

twenty-five, at the time he was called to be an apostle, then he must have been ninety-three or ninety-four at the time it is said he wrote the Apocalypse. Does this appear probable? Can we believe that the man was over ninety years of age when he wrote that book? There is a luxuriance of imagination displayed in the Apocalypse that comports much better with his age at an earlier date than at the year 96, when, as we have shown, he must have been nearly an hundred years old. We hold, then, that the extreme age of John in the year 95 or afterwards, would show that he could not then have written the Apocalypse.

8. There still remains another consideration. It is said, by those competent to judge, that the original text of the Apocalypse, although exhibiting the same general peculiarities of diction with St. John's Gospel and Epistles, yet nevertheless abounds much more in Hebraisms and anomalies—a circumstance which seems to intimate an earlier period of the author's life, when he had but just begun to write in a foreign tongue.

Sir Isaac Newton, speaking of the style of the Apocalypse, says: "It is fuller of Hebraisms than John's Gospel. From thence it may be gathered, that it was written when John was newly come out of Judea, where he had been used to the Syriac tongue; and that he did not write his Gospel, till, by long converse with the Asiatic Greeks, he had left off most of the Hebraisms." — ("Observations," &c., part ii., chap. i.)

#### IV. — RECAPITULATION.

We have thus gone through, in a very brief manner, with the category of reasons, which have been suggested to our mind, in favor of the fact that the Apocalypse was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. In regard to the historical testimony, it will be remembered, that Epiphanius repeatedly affirmed

that the book was written in the reign of Claudius, or previously to 54. Tertullian, and after him Jerome, are supposed to have taught that John was banished to Patmos in the reign of Nero, and this agrees with the title-page of the Syriac version of the book; but Irenæus affirms that the Apocalypse was seen near the end of Domitian's reign. The mass of the writers have followed Irenæus, so that after all we perhaps have the testimony of only one man to this point. But is it certain that Irenæus meant that the Apocalypse *was not written until that time*? He says it was not *seen*. Did he mean that John did not have his vision until then? or that the work had not appeared, so far as he knew, until that date? If he meant the latter, it is consistent with the fact that it was written in the time of Nero. If he meant the former, then we shall be obliged to conclude with Sir Isaac Newton, that that father had perhaps heard from his master, Polycarp, that he had received this book from John about the time of Domitian's death; or indeed John might himself at that time have made a new publication of it, from whence Irenæus might have imagined it was then but newly written. But even though no force be given to these conjectures, the preponderance of evidence found in the book itself is so great, in favor of the belief that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, that in our mind not a single doubt remains. This supposition, thus substantially established, agrees entirely with the divine character of the book. It weakens not our confidence in its authenticity. It places the writing of it nearer to the day of Christ; and it enables us to show that it has a nearer and stronger alliance to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and to the Epistles. It enables us to interpret what is said in the Apocalypse of the coming of Christ, the day of the Lord, the judgment of the nations, the establishment of his kingdom, and the descent of the New Jerusalem, in harmony with the signification which those subjects unquestionably bear in the Gospels and Epistles. The

Gospel of John was not written probably until after the destruction of Jerusalem ; and this is the reason, we conclude, why the luminous discourse of Jesus concerning that event, recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is omitted by John. But this reason, which would lead us to assign a late date to the Gospel of John, would lead us to assign an earlier date to the Apocalypse ; for therein we find most of the warnings, comparisons, metaphors, and prophecies, pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem, which the three first-named Gospels and the Epistles contain.

We conclude, then, with a repetition of the remark above made, that in our mind there remains not a doubt that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem.



## PLAN OF THE APOCALYPSE.

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It will assist the reader greatly in understanding the Apocalypse, to become familiar, in the first place, with *the plan*, project, or design.

To assist him in this, the following map or description is drawn.

The Apocalypse is principally divided into **FOUR PARTS**. We are confident this was not understood by those who divided the New Testament into chapters and verses. It will not, therefore, be in our power to pay a strict reference to that division.

**FIRST PART.** This comprises the first three chapters, and contains the introduction, and the epistles to the seven churches in Asia.

**SECOND PART.** This comprises the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters. It is capable of a very important subdivision, as we shall show hereafter. The great topic of this general division is the overthrow of the Jewish nation, temple, and worship, and the establishment of the kingdom of God in the place of the Mosaic ritual.

**THIRD PART.** This part extends from the beginning of chapter xii. to xx. 10. The principal subject throughout is the overthrow of the Roman persecuting power.

**FOURTH PART.** The fourth and last part extends from chapter xx. 11, to the end of the book. It is to be regretted that the division of chapters had not been made at the end of the 10th verse of the 20th chapter. If the 21st chapter had commenced at the beginning of the 11th verse of the 20th, the division would have corresponded much more nearly to the true plan of the work than it now does. The subject is the final triumph of the Gospel. The principal visions of the Apocalypse will be found in the 2d 3d, and 4th parts.

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The following scale will put the four divisions before the eye of the reader at a glance :

CHAPTER I.	}	Introduction ; and Epistles to the Seven Churches.
" II.		
" III.		

CHAPTER IV.	}	Overthrow of the Jewish Nation and Religion, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.
" V.		
" VI.		
" VII.		
" VIII.		
" IX.		
" X.		
" XI.		

CHAPTER XII.	}	Overthrow of the Roman Persecuting Power.	
" XIII.			
" XIV.			
" XV.			
" XVI.			
" XVII.			
" XVIII.			
" XIX.			
" XX.			1
			2
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7		
	8		
	9		
	10		

	}	Establishment and triumph of Christianity.
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
CHAPTER XXI.		
" XXII.		

A MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE DIVISIONS OF  
THE APOCALYPSE.

## PART I.

## CHAPTERS I.—III.

Preface, or Inscription, . . . . .	chap. i. 1—3
Salutation and Introduction, . . . . .	“ “ 4—20

## EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. CHAPTERS II. AND III.

Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, . . . . .	chap. ii. 1—7
Epistle to the Church at Smyrna, . . . . .	“ “ 8—11
Epistle to the Church at Pergamos, . . . . .	“ “ 12—17
Epistle to the Church at Thyatira, . . . . .	“ “ 18—29
Epistle to the Church at Sardis, . . . . .	chap. iii. 1—6
Epistle to the Church at Philadelphia, . . . . .	“ “ 7—13
Epistle to the Church at Laodicea, . . . . .	“ “ 14—22

## PART II.

## CHAPTERS IV.—XI.

Description of the imaginary dwelling-place of God, and of his attendants and their employments, chap. iv.
Opening of the book sealed with seven seals, which revealed the punishment and destruction of the Jews, chap. v.

## EVENTS PRELIMINARY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Opening of the 1st seal—	Preaching of the Gospel,	vi. 1, 2.
“ “ 2d “	War, . . . . .	“ 3, 4.
“ “ 3d “	Famine, . . . . .	“ 5, 6.
“ “ 4th “	Pestilence, . . . . .	“ 7, 8.
“ “ 5th “	Blood of the martyrs not yet avenged, . . . . .	“ 9—11.
“ “ 6th “	Symbols of the destruction of the Jews, and the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, . . . . .	“ 12—vii. 17
“ “ 7th “	The sounding of the seven trumpets, . . . . .	viii. 1—xi. 19

RECAPITULATION OF THE EVENTS UNDER THE SEVENTH SEAL.

The description of the events under the *seventh* seal, as we have indicated, extends through the entire 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters ; and we find under this seal another series of *seven*, viz., the sounding of the seven trumpets, as follows :

Trumpets given to the seven angels, . . . viii. 1—6

SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS.

1st trumpet—	Partial calamities of the Jews, .	“	7
2d “	The same, . . . . .	“	8, 9
3d “	The same, . . . . .	“	10, 11
4th “	The same, . . . . .	“	12, 13

WOE TRUMPETS.

5th “	Approach of the Roman armies, .	ix.	1—12
6th “	Increase of the armies, and end of the Jewish state declared, . .	“	13—xi. 14
7th “	Establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, . . . . .	xi.	15—19

PART III.

CHAPTERS XII.—XX. 10.

Woman clothed with the sun, whom the dragon persecuted, . . . . .	xii.	entire.
The first beast, . . . . .	xiii.	1--10
The second beast, . . . . .	“	11—18
Symbols of the Christian Victory, . . . . .	xiv.	entire.

SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH.

The vial angels appear, . . . . .	xv.	1
At this the Church praises God, . . . . .	“	2—4
Vials given to the angels, . . . . .	“	5—8
1st vial poured out, . . . . .	xvi.	1, 2
2d “ “ “ . . . . .	“	3
3d “ “ “ . . . . .	“	4—7
4th “ “ “ . . . . .	“	8, 9
5th “ “ “ . . . . .	“	10, 11
6th “ “ “ . . . . .	“	12—16
7th “ “ “ . . . . .	“	17—21

Explanation of the judgment of the great harlot,	xvii.	entire.
Fall of the city of Rome,	xviii.	entire.
Joy of the saints,	xix.	1—11
Final victory,		" 12—xx. 10.

Thus the third part ends in the middle of the twentieth chapter

## PART IV.

### CHAPTER XX. 11, TO END OF THE APOCALYPSE.

#### FINAL PREVALENCE OF THE GOSPEL, AND BLESSEDNESS OF BELIEVERS.

The mediatorial throne established,	xx.	11
Christ's judgment of the nations,	"	12, 13
Death and hell destroyed,	"	14
Enemies also destroyed,	"	15
Descent of the New Jerusalem, and all things made new,	xxi.	1—7
Punishment of unbelievers contrasted with the felicity of believers,	"	8
The New Jerusalem largely described,	"	9—xxii. 5

#### EPILOGUE.

Angel of the Apocalypse (mentioned i. 1) as- sures John, at the close, of the truth of what he had shown him,	xxii.	6, 7
John falls to worship the angel,	"	8
This the angel forbids,	"	9
He repeats that the time of the fulfilment is at hand,	"	10, 11
Jesus confirms the whole, especially the fact that he will come quickly,	"	12, 20
Benediction,	"	21



# THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

**T**HE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his ser-

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## CHAPTER I.

*The Revelation.* — This book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ for two reasons ; 1st, it was a revelation “which God gave unto him ;” and, 2nd, it was a revelation which he made to his servant John. The word revelation here should be taken in its usual and obvious sense, as a manifestation of a thing which was before hidden or secret. The truths of the book were communicated from God to the mind of his Son Jesus Christ, and from the mind of Jesus Christ to that of John. Of the manner of the revelation it is not necessary that we speak ; the fact is plainly established by the text. For other instances of the occurrence of this word, see Rom. ii. 5 ; viii. 19 ; xvi. 25 ; Gal. i. 12 ; and from the last verse quoted it will be perceived, that Paul also received the gospel which he preached “by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In profession, at least, the Epistles of Paul and the Apocalypse stand on the same ground, as it respects the authority from which they were derived. ¶ *Shortly come to pass.* — This is a very important point. It is stated at the very commencement of the Revelation, and is worthy of peculiar attention. One would conclude that all the matters contained in the book were to be fulfilled at no

vants things which must shortly come to pass ; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John :

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distant day. This, however, is not to be understood as if everything mentioned in the book were future ; for it will be seen by i. 19, that some things had passed, and some were then present. It could be said only of those which were future, that they were “shortly to come to pass.” The fact, that the events foretold by the revelator were near, was asserted by him again and again ; see i. 3. So much for the commencement of the work. At the conclusion, the nearness of the events is again repeatedly declared ; xxii. 7, 12, 20. In fact, we have almost the very words at the conclusion which we have at the beginning — “The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done ;” xxii. 6, compared with i. 1. The remarks of the very learned Dr. Hammond are so valuable on this point, that we shall present them at some length : — “Having gone through all the other parts of the New Testament, I came to this last of the *Apocalypse*, as to a rock that many had miscarried and split upon, with a full resolution not to venture on the expounding of one word in it, but only to perform one office to it, common to the rest, the review of the translation. But it pleased God otherwise to dispose of it ; for before

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testi-

I had read (with that design of translating only) to the end of the first verse of the book, these words, *which must come to pass presently*, had such an impression on my mind, offering themselves as a key to the whole prophecie, (in like manner as, *this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled* — Matt. 24, 34, — have demonstrated infallibly to what coming of *Christ* that whole chapter did belong,) that I could not resist the force of them, but attempted presently a general survey of the whole book, to see whether those words might not probably be extended to all the prophecies of it, and have a literal truth in them, viz., that the things foretold and represented in the ensuing visions were *presently, speedily to come to pass*, one after another, after the writing of them. But before I could prudently pass this judgment, which was to be founded in understanding the subject-matter of all the visions, some other evidences I met with, concurring with this, and giving me abundant grounds of confidence of this one thing, that although I should not be able to understand one period of all these visions, yet I must be obliged to think that they belonged to those times that were then immediately ensuing, and that they had accordingly their completion; and, consequently, that they that pretended to find in those visions the predictions of events in these later ages, and those so nicely defined as to belong to particular acts and persons in this and some other kingdoms, (a far narrower circuit, also, than that which reasonably was to be assigned to that one Christian prophecie for the universal church of *Christ*,) had much mistaken the drift of it. The arguments that induced this conclusion were these: First, that this was again immediately inculcated, v. 3, *for the time is nigh*, and that rendered as a proof that these *seven churches*, to whom the prophecie

mony of *Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw.

was written, were concerned to observe and consider the contents of it. *Blessed is he that reads*, and he that *hears*, &c., (saith *Arethas*, that so *hears as to practise*,) *for the time, or season, the point of time, is near at hand*. Secondly, that as here in the front, sc c. xxii. 6, at the close, or shutting up of all these visions, and of *St. John's Epistle* to the *seven churches*, which contained them, 't is there again added, that *God hath sent his angel to shew to his servants the things that must be speedily, or suddenly*; and immediately upon the back of that are set the words of *Christ*, the author of this prophecie, *Behold I come quickly*, not in the notion of his final coming to judgment, (which hath been the cause of a great deal of mistake—see note on Matt. xxiv. 6,) but of his coming to destroy his enemies, the Jews, &c.; and then, *Blessed is he that observes, or keeps, the prophecies of this book*, parallel to what has been said at the beginning, c. i. 3. Thirdly, that, xxii. 10, the command is given to *John*, not to seal the prophecies of the book, which that it signifies that they were of present use to those times, and therefore to be kept open, and not to be laid up as things that posterity was only or principally concerned in, appears by that reason rendered of it, *because the time is nigh*, the same which had here at the beginning been given, as the reason that he that considered the prophecies was *blessed* in so doing." — (Intro. to Apoc.) The remarks of Professor Stuart on this point are certainly worthy of very serious consideration, coming, as they do, not only from a gentleman of very great learning, but from one whose preconceived opinions would have led him to take different ground, had he regarded it as being tenable. "In Rev. i. 1, the writer says, that God gave to Christ the revelation, in order to show his servants what should take place *speedily*,

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those

things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

4 John to the seven churches

*quickly.* In i. 3, the author solemnly declares, that what is written in this book is of speedy accomplishment; *the time is near*, i. e. the time when what is revealed will be accomplished. Thus much in the prologue to the book. The epilogue repeats three several times the equivalent declaration, *Behold, I come quickly*; xxii. 7, 12, 20. The *coming* of Christ is the main subject of the book, so that the declaration here is, that what the book contains will speedily be accomplished. That such must be the meaning, is evident by appeal to similar declarations in Rev. ii. 16, iii. 11, and xi. 14. No one can doubt, that what is said is what is meant, in these last cases. As little reasonable doubt can there be, if philology is to be trusted, in the cases just cited in the prologue and epilogue of the book. What tolerable meaning now can be given, and defended on exegetical grounds, to the declarations in question, if we suppose that the main portion of the book relates to events some thousand and more of years then future? And if every writer is to be permitted the liberty of explaining his own purpose, why should we refuse to John the liberty that we concede to all others?"—(Hints on Prophecy, 2d ed., pp. 111, 112.) ¶ *By his angel.*—As angels are spoken of so frequently in this book, each one always performing a different office, it is worthy of remark, that the angel here spoken of is the one who made known the whole revelation, and hence may be called the apocalyptic angel. We shall meet with many angels in the course of the book; but we shall not meet with this one again until we come near the close, xxii. 6, 8. ¶ *His servant John.*—That John, the apostle, is here meant, is shown in the introduction to this work.

Ver. 2. *Who bear record.*—John bear record of the three things here named. 1st. The word of God; 2d. The testimony of Jesus Christ; and, 3d. "All things that he (John) saw." 1st. Whether the word of God here is to bear the same sense as in John i. 1, or whether it signifies the gospel of God, is somewhat doubtful. It is precisely the same phrase which is used personally for Christ in xix. 13. 2d. It was a favorite practice of John, in his gospel and epistles, to speak of the gospel of Jesus as a testimony, and the preaching or publishing of it as testifying, or bearing witness, &c. 3d. By all things that he saw, John, doubtless, meant those which the angel showed unto him.

Ver. 3. *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear.*—When the Apocalypse was written, books were few, and few persons, therefore, could read. Many were obliged to hear, because they could not obtain the manuscripts to read them. Hence the readers and the hearers are both mentioned. The language is probably designed to have special application to the churches whom John addressed. But it is not he who readeth *only*, but readeth and keepeth. So in Luke xi. 28, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God *and keep it.*" ¶ *For the time is at hand.*—What time? The time when these great events were to be fulfilled. The time mentioned ver. 1, and that was shortly to come. Thus far the preface of the book. The first three verses are the preface; and the preface contains three points: 1st. By whom the revelation was made; 2d. The subject-matter of the revelation; and, 3d. The blessedness of reading and *keeping it*. It was addressed particularly to that generation, to people then on the earth. *They* were called on to read and keep the word for the time

which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him

*was at hand.* Is not the time here intended the time of Christ's coming to take vengeance on the Jews? See the remarks on i. 1. In the 22d chapter of this book, the revelator says, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, [why?] for the time is at hand;" ver. 10. Again, ver. 12, "Behold I come QUICKLY." And again, ver. 20, "Surely, I come QUICKLY." In 1 Peter iv. 7, "The end of all things is at hand." So in 2 Thess. ii. 2, "The day of Christ is at hand." In Phil. iv. 5, "The Lord [for the day, coming of the Lord,] is at hand;" and in Rom. xiii. 12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Such is the uniform language of the epistles. The coming of Christ, the great day of the Lord, WAS AT HAND.

Ver. 4. Having thus concluded the brief preface, or introduction, we come now to the book itself. It is in the form of an epistle. *John to the seven churches.* Here the revelator once more gives his name. If he had been any other than the apostle John, there would have been some need of his explaining himself further, and showing who he was. He says, John, by way of preëminence, meaning *the John* of the church. And what seven churches are here referred to? The names of the churches are given in ver. 11 of this chapter, viz., the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. But what need was there that these seven churches should be counselled and warned, and none others? It seems very probable that John uses these churches as representative of the Christian churches in general. He selects seven as samples of the rest, and gives to them the advice which all needed. The careful reader of the Apocalypse needs not to be told, that the number seven is very frequently employed therein. It is a series that is continually occurring. "Here we meet for the first time

(says Woodhouse) with the mention of the number *seven*, which is afterwards so frequently and symbolically used, in this sacred book; wherein we read of *seven* spirits of God, *seven* angels, *seven* seals, *seven* trumpets, *seven* vials, *seven* heads of the dragon and of the beast. In which passages, for the most part, as in others of holy Scripture, this number appears to represent a large, complete, yet undefined quantity. Hannah, in her song, (1 Sam. ii. 5,) says, 'The barren hath borne *seven* (that is, a large, but indefinite, number of) children.' So God threatens that he will punish the Israelites *seven* times; that is, very completely and severely. In the Hebrew etymology of this word *seven*, it signifies fulness and perfection. — (Daubuz.) Philo styles it the completing number; and it is mentioned as such by Cyprian. With the Israelites, this number became thus important, because God having completed his work of creation in six days, and added thereto the *seventh*, a day of rest, commanded them, in memorial thereof, to reckon time by *sevens*. Through the nations of the East, this manner of computation passed on to the Greeks and Romans, as hath been shown in a variety of instances. By the *seven* churches of Asia are implied *all* the churches of Asia, and, it may be, all the Christian churches, in whatever situation or period of the world. Such was the opinion of the most ancient commentators on the Apocalypse, who lived near to the time of its publication." — (Annotations on the Apocalypse, 8vo., London, 1828, p. 58.) ¶ *Grace be unto you.* — This is the apostolical benediction. "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. i. 7; and the same may be found in substance in various other places. 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 3; Eph. i. 2; Phil. i. 2; Col. i. 2; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 2; Phil. 3. In all these

which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne;

cases, and many others which might be named, mention is made first of God the Father, and second, of his Son Jesus Christ. The revelator gives it more the Hebrew form. Instead of speaking of God as the Father, he calls him *the present, the past, and the to come*, which seems to have been designed to express his endless existence. It is a circumlocution for the name *Jehovah*, which, after the captivity in Babylon, the Jews, from superstitious veneration for the word, refused to pronounce. *Jehovah* signifies the self-existent, in which the idea of the endlessly-existent is involved: he who gives being and existence to others.—(Calmet.) The Jewish writers often use the phrase, of which the apostle's Greek terms are a literal translation.—(A. Clarke.) ¶ *And from the seven spirits.*—This is the first mention of the seven spirits, and it deserves serious consideration. There are two views taken of the subject by different commentators. 1st. It is supposed that the Holy Spirit is intended. Bede remarks, "The one spirit is said to be septiform to describe its perfection and plenitude;" in the same sense in which seven thunders are used to describe loud thunder. The other interpretation is, that the figure of the seven spirits is taken from the attendants upon earthly monarchs, the seven most faithful and confidential being kept near to the royal person, and being his medium of communication with his subjects. The latter interpretation seems to us the most probable, although there is nothing strained or unnatural in either; and, in fact, they may both be combined without violence. That ancient monarchs were attended in the manner described, see Ezra vii. 14; Esther i. 10, 14; Jer. iii. 25; 1 Esdras viii. 11;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of

Tobit xii. 15. Such being the custom of ancient monarchs, and John drawing the court of heaven in his imagination after the form of an ancient earthly court, he supposed seven spirits to dwell near the presence of God. This, however, is merely scenical; as the robe, the ring, and the shoes that were put upon the prodigal on his return to his father's house. They were merely the imagery used by our Lord to describe the joy of the parent at the event. The view which we have adopted is further confirmed by the position of the seven spirits; they were *before the throne*, not on the throne, with the Eternal; but waiting at the foot thereof, to execute his commands. These seven spirits of God belong both to the Father and the Son, as we shall see when we come to other parts of the Apocalypse. See iii. 1; v. 6. The reason of this is obvious. Jesus is the vicegerent of the Father; not ruling under him, but, in the spiritual kingdom, ruling in his room and stead. The seven spirits, therefore, which attended at God's throne, may with great propriety be said to execute the will of both the Father and the Son. See especially v. 6.

Ver. 5. *And from Jesus Christ.*—The benediction is from the Son as well as from the Father, and such, we have shown, was the apostolical form. ¶ *Faithful witness.*—Jesus was a faithful witness, faithful and true; iii. 14. The word translated witness, signifies not merely what we call a witness, but a martyr also,—one who is ready to seal his testimony with his blood. This was true of our Lord; he died, in attestation of the truth he had taught. That the idea of martyrdom entered into the conception of the revelator, seems evident from the next words. ¶ *The*

the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and

*first-begotten of the dead.*—That is, the first-born from the dead, or the first raised. Paul called Christ the “first fruits of them that slept;” 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. The word translated first-begotten in the passage before us, is elsewhere in the New Testament translated *first-born*. It occurs but once in the Apocalypse. ¶ *Prince of the kings of the earth.*—The word translated “prince,” here signifies leader, or first in order. Jesus is called “the Prince of life;” Acts iii. 15; and it is also said, “God hath exalted him to be a prince and a saviour;” Acts v. 31. He is said to be prince of the kings of the earth, because he is the greatest of all of them, “the King of kings and Lord of lords;” xix. 16. ¶ *Unto him that loved us and washed us, &c.*—Here commences an ascription of praise and glory to Christ, which continues to the end of the following verse. And in what sense did Jesus wash men from their sins in his own blood? The figure of blood, as it is here used, is derived from the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual. God said to the children of Israel, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul;” Lev. xvii. 11. Now, if we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we shall find that Paul draws his figure of the sanctifying and atoning power of the mere blood of Christ, from this portion of the Jewish service. “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission;” Heb. ix. 22. Again, Paul says, “But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves,

but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God;” 11—14. Such is the manner in which the mere blood of Christ came to be spoken of as possessing a purifying power. It is only in a metaphorical sense that it can have such a power. In this sense the blood of Christ is frequently spoken of by the New Testament writers. 1 Peter i. 2, 19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9; vii. 14; xii. 11. It is well known to every student of the New Testament, that the *truth* is the purifying agent under the gospel. What else can purify the soul? Jesus prayed the Father to “sanctify men through the truth;” and then he added, “Thy word is truth;” John xvii. 17. “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil;” Prov. xvi. 6. As the truth, then, is the purifier of the soul, in what sense is it said that the blood of Christ cleanseth men from sin? Evidently when it stands as a metaphor of the truth. Now, that John knew that the Lord Jesus spoke of his blood metaphorically for the truth, will be evident, if we look at his gospel. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh

dominion for ever and ever.  
Amen.

my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him ;" John vi. 53—56. Who can suppose that blood and flesh are to be understood here in the literal sense ? Our Lord himself applied the metaphor before he closed the discourse in which we find it. He showed his disciples he did not mean that blood, in the literal sense, would give them life ; for he added, "It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life ;" ver. 63. This shows us unequivocally that blood stands frequently in the New Testament for the truth which Jesus preached. It is by this that men are sanctified. Paul states, that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish ;" Eph. v. 25—27. When it is said, therefore, by the revelator, that Christ loved the church, and washed it from its sins in his own blood, he expresses precisely the truth stated by the apostle Paul, as just quoted.

Ver. 6. *Made us kings and priests.* — How were the apostles and Christians made "kings and priests" unto God ? These were the highest terms of distinction, and entitled the possessor to high honors. The believers are said to reign with Christ *on the earth*. See v. 10, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests ; and we shall reign *on the earth*." Jesus said his disciples should reign with him ; the twelve apostles were promised to sit on twelve thrones, judging [or reigning over] the *twelve* tribes of [spiritual] Israel ; Matt. xix. 28. True believers were said to "inherit the kingdom ;" Matt. xxv. 34. "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see

the kingdom ;" Luke xii. 32. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him ;" 2 Tim. ii. 12. See also 1 Cor. iv. 8, and vi. 2, 3. So God promised the Jews of old, "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people : for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation ;" Exod. xix. 5, 6. See, also, 1 Peter ii. 5—9, where Peter says to the believers, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." ¶ *To him be glory*—i. e., to Christ, the Son of God, be glory and dominion. Jesus receives praise and homage as the mediator between God and men. ¶ *For ever and ever.*—The duration expressed by these terms must be determined by the nature of the subject to which they are applied. The literal translation is, "to the ages of the ages." The expression is indefinite. It is sometimes applied to temporal things, which long since came to an end. When applied to the existence of God and Christ, and the praise and honor which are due them, we know, from the nature of the subject, that endless duration is intended. ¶ *Amen.*—This word signifies truth, firmness, stability. It is used for affirmation, and for consent or desire. In the former sense Jesus employs it, in the well-known prefix to some of his solemn declarations, as "Verily, verily, I say unto you ;" but it bears the latter sense in the verse before us. After having given the ascription of praise and glory to Christ, throughout all ages, the revelator adds, Amen, or so let it be.

Ver. 7. *Behold he cometh.*—Who is here intended ? Evidently, Jesus Christ, who had been spoken of in

him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the

earth shall wail because of him Even so, Amen.

the two preceding verses. This coming of Christ was that virtual display of divine power which was seen at the overthrow of Jerusalem and the abolition of the Mosaic religion. The subject is clothed in oriental imagery. It was a figure of the ancient prophets, to represent God as coming in the clouds. "He maketh the clouds his chariot." See *Psa. civ. 3; Jer. iv. 13; Nahum i. 3; Matt. xxiv. 30.* Daniel refers to the coming of the Son of man to establish his kingdom, in similar phraseology: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed;" *vii. 13, 14.* This coming of Christ was one of the events which were shortly to come to pass. That it was after his crucifixion is evident, because it is said, They that pierced him shall wail because of him; evidently referring to his crucifixion; and all the kindreds and the tribes of the land should mourn. See *Matt. xxiv. 30*, where it will be seen the Saviour applied the same language in reference to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Let us now consider these three passages in connection. First, Daniel. He states, 1st. It is one like the Son of man that comes; 2d. The Son of man comes "in the clouds of heaven;" 3d. He comes in his kingdom, or in power and glory. Second, The

revelator. He evidently copies from Daniel: 1st. "It is the Son of man," or Jesus Christ, that comes; see *ver. 4; 2d.* "He cometh in the clouds;" 3d. He cometh with power and glory, for all his enemies are cast down before him. Third, The Lord himself, as reported by Matthew. 1st. It is the Son of man that comes; 2d. He comes "in the clouds of heaven;" 3d. In power and great glory, and all the tribes mourn. There is so remarkable an agreement between the passages quoted from Daniel, from the Apocalypse, and from Matthew, that we cannot entertain a doubt they all refer to the same subject, viz., Christ's coming at the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the abolition of the Mosaic religion. The testimony of the following authors will confirm the opinion we have given. Archbishop Newcome says, "The coming of Christ to destroy the Jews was a *virtual*, and not a *real* one, and was to be understood figuratively, and not literally." Again he says, "The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is emphatically called the *coming of Christ*. The spirit of prophecy speaks particularly of this, because the city and temple were then destroyed, and the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews subverted. The Jews also suffered very great calamities under Adrian; but not so great as those under Vespasian; and the desolation under Adrian is not so particularly foretold. *But I think that any signal interposition in behalf of his church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be metaphorically called a coming of Christ.*" — (*Observations*, pp. 280, 281.) Dr. Campbell remarks, on the expression, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," "We have no reason to think that a particular phenomenon in the sky is here suggested. The striking evidences which would be given of the divine presence, and avenging justice,

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,

are a justification of the terms.”—(Note on Matt. xxiv. 30.) Kenrick observes, “The great power and glory of Christ were as conspicuously displayed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other circumstances which accompanied that event, as if they had seen him coming upon the clouds of heaven, to punish his enemies. When the prophet Isaiah represents God as about to punish the Egyptians, he speaks of him as riding upon a swift cloud for that purpose; Isa. xix. 1. In that case, there was no visible appearance of Jehovah upon a cloud; but it was language which the prophet adopted, in order to express the evident hand of God in the calamities of Egypt. The same thing may be said of the language of Christ upon the present occasion.”—(Expos. on Matt. xxiv. 30.) Dr. Hammond interprets Christ’s coming to be a “coming in the exercise of his kingly office, to work vengeance on his enemies, and discriminate the faithful believers from them.”—(Par. and Annot. Matt. xvi. 28.) Again he says, “The only objection against this interpretation is, that this destruction being wrought by the Roman army, and those as much enemies of Christianity as any, and the very same people that had joined with the Jews to put Christ to death, it doth there-upon appear strange, that either of those armies which are called abominable should be called *God’s armies*, or that Christ should be said to come, when in truth it was Vespasian and Titus that thus came against this people. To this I answer, that it is ordinary with God, in the Old Testament, to call those Babylonish, Assyrian heathen armies *his*, which did his work in punishing the Jews, when they rebelled against him.”—(Ibid. Matt. xxiv. 3.) ¶ *They also which pierced him.*—This is peculiarly like the apostle John. In no other place, except in the Apocalypse, and in

John’s gospel, is this fact mentioned about the piercing Christ’s side with a spear; and in both instances John refers to what is mentioned by the prophet Zech. (xii. 10,) viz., that those who pierced him should behold him at his coming in power and glory. These are singular facts, if John were not the author of the Apocalypse. ¶ *Even so, Amen.*—This is almost precisely like xxii. 20, “He which testifieth these things, saith, surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.” It is an expression of desire for the coming of Christ. The enemies of Jesus would wail because of his coming; but he directed his friends to rejoice when that event should happen. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh;” Luke xxi. 28. They said, “Even so, Amen.”

Ver 8. *I am Alpha.*—Having completed this section of the introduction, God, the Father, whom John had mentioned, ver. 4, is represented as speaking again, and confirming what had been said by his unerring and immutable authority. “I am Alpha and Omega.” Alpha was the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega was the last. It was the custom of Hebrew writers to use the first and last of their letters to signify the beginning and end of things. John introduces the custom here; but writing, as he did, in Greek, he takes the Greek letters. ¶ *The beginning and the ending*, i. e., I am Alpha, the beginning, and Omega, the ending; I exist forever; or, as it is in the next words, I am he “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” This is the precise phraseology applied to the Father in ver. 4. These terms, in this instance, are applied to God, the Almighty; but in ver. 11, and in other places, they seem to be applied to Jesus Christ. The terms

saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and

are peculiarly those of the Apocalypse, occurring in the following passages only: Rev. i. 8, 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

Ver. 9. *John*.—The revelator here gives his name for the third time; and then proceeds to describe the appearance of the Lord Jesus to him, with the symbols of his power, and the commission received from Him to write what he beholds. ¶ *Your brother*.—John was their brother in Christ. It will be remembered this book was addressed to the seven Christian churches in Asia; ver. 4. John styles himself the brother of those suffering Christians; their companion in tribulation, for he was at that time suffering banishment for his devotion to Christ; and he was their companion also in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; see under ver. 6. ¶ *Isle that is called Patmos*.—He was in the isle of Patmos, whither he had been banished, for the word of God, [i. e. for adhering to the word of God,] and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Patmos is a small island, lying west of Asia Minor, in the Archipelago. It is one of the nineteen islands called the Sporades; and is between Icaria and the promontory of Miletus, or between Samos and Naxos, and is now called Patimo, or Patmosa. Its circuit may be twenty-five or thirty miles. There are different opinions in regard to the time of John's banishment, some supposing that it took place in the reign of Nero, and others in the reign of Domitian. That the book of Revelation was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, we can entertain no doubt; and if so, John was banished in the reign of some emperor previous to that time. In the Syrian

patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind

version of the Apocalypse, the title-page declares, that *it was written in Patmos, whither John was sent by Nero Cæsar*.—(Stuart on Apoc. i. 267.) This banishment, probably, took place between A. D. 55 and 60.

10. *Lord's day*.—This is the only instance in the Bible of the occurrence of this phrase. It is probable the first day of the week was intended. This was the day on which Jesus rose from the dead; and very early did the Christians commence to observe that as the holy-day of the week, instead of the Jewish Sabbath; see Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Jesus was Lord even of the Sabbath day; Mark ii. 28; and had the authority, therefore, to change the day. The same principle is observed in the New as in the Old Testament, viz., that one day in seven is sacred; but the day was changed from the seventh to the first day; and the latter is called the Lord's day. ¶ *In the spirit*—that is, under the influence of the spirit. God fits his servants for the duties he calls them to perform. The spirit was given without measure unto Jesus; Isa. xi. 2; Matt. xii. 18. The Christians upon the day of Pentecost were all filled with the Holy Ghost; Acts ii. 4; that is, such a measure of divine power and wisdom was communicated to them as to fit them for the duties they were called to perform. Paul took the same view; 2 Cor. iii. 3; Eph. i. 17; and Peter likewise; 1st Epistle, iv. 14. ¶ *A trumpet*.—The revelator was under the peculiar influence of God's spirit, upon the Christian Sabbath; and he heard a great voice as of a trumpet. A communication of divine wisdom to men is described as a voice uttered

me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last : and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven

from the throne of God ; see iv. 5 ; viii. 5, 13 ; xi. 15, 19 ; xviii. 4. The Jews were accustomed almost from the earliest antiquity to represent the voice of God by the sounding of the trumpet. The trumpet was an instrument much used in the holy services of the Jews ; and a blast preceded the solemn communications from the excellent glory. "And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice ;" Exod. xix. 19. The trumpet was blown by the priests in the course of their services ; and, in certain cases, when the trumpet was blown, the people waited, from that sign, to hear the voice of God. The sacred writers often speak of the voice of the Lord ; not only in a metaphorical sense, as when the thunder is called his voice, — Job xxxvii. 5 ; xl. 9 ; Psa. lxxvii. 18, — but in the literal sense also. Instance the "still small voice ;" 1 Kings xix. 12 ; the voice from heaven at Christ's baptism, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ;" Matt. iii. 17 ; Mark i. 11 ; Luke iii. 22 ; the same voice uttering the same approval, at the transfiguration ; Matt. xvii. 5 ; Mark ix. 7 ; Luke ix. 35, 36 ; the voice in answer to the prayer of Christ, "Father, glorify thy name," saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again ;" John xii. 28. This voice the apostles recognized as having spoken ; Heb. xii. 26 ; 2 Pet. i. 17. The voice of Jesus addressed Paul from the skies ; Acts ix. 4—7. Paul was also addressed in a similar manner ; x. 13. It was, therefore, perfectly correspondent to the style, both of the Old and New Testament,

churches which are in Asia unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

for the revelator to speak of the communications God made to him, as coming in a trumpet-like voice. His mind was evidently on the temple, and on the services there. The voice was behind him. He saw not who spake, but he heard the words. We know not what language was used. Saul testified that the voice which he heard spake in Hebrew ; Acts xxvi. 14. The voice which spake to John certainly used a language which he could understand, and that was all that was necessary.

11. *Alpha and Omega.*— These terms will be found explained under ver. 8. They are applied to both the Father and the Son. ¶ *First and the last.*— Meaning the same, or nearly so, as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. ¶ *What thou seest, or rather, what thou art about to see, write in a book.*— That is, make solemn record of it ; and send the communication to the seven churches in Asia, in particular. ¶ *Asia.*— By Asia here is not meant the entire quarter of the world which at present bears that name, but Asia Minor, so called, — a cape, or peninsula, that lies between the waters of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It belongs now to the Turks. The scimitar gleams where the proudest trophies of the cross were once gathered. The island of Patmos was in its immediate vicinity. The seven churches are named ; but as we shall notice the case of each church, when we come to consider the epistle sent to each, as recorded in chaps. ii. and iii., we pass by them now without any further remarks. Why these seven churches are mentioned, and not others, is explained under verse 4.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

12. *I turned.*—The voice had been behind him; ver. 10. He had been instructed, What thou seest, or art about to see, write in a book. He turned to see who addressed him. ¶ *Seven golden candlesticks.*—Here again the number seven is preserved. It was a sacred number, or series, made so in the first place, perhaps, in the minds of the Jews, by the seventh day being established as a day of rest. Thus *seven* became a sacred round of days, and signified to the mind of the pious Hebrew the idea of sacred completeness and perfection. The revelator evidently draws several of his metaphors in this chapter from the sacred furniture of the temple. Moses was commanded to make a golden candlestick, of massive size, having branches, three upon a side, very highly ornamented; and these, with the help of the main shaft, would hold seven lamps. See God's command to Moses to make this candlestick, Exod. xxv. 31—40, where a very particular model of it is described, and the manner in which it was made is showed; Exod. xxxvii. 17—24; Numb. viii. 4. It stood in the holy place without the vail, was fed with pure olive oil, and was lighted by the priests every evening, and extinguished every morning. Do we not have here the origin of the figure of the seven golden candlesticks? True, they were all united in one main shaft; but there were seven. There is a remarkable resemblance in Zech. iv. and v. to the style of the Apocalypse. The prophet saw a vision of a candlestick all of gold, with seven lamps thereon. These figures of speech were probably well known to the revelator. He, therefore, employed the well-known metaphor to represent the seven churches to whom he was to write.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and

13. *In the midst of the seven candlesticks.*—A person was seen in the midst of the seven candlesticks. When the high priest was behind the branches, moving about to dress the lamps, he appeared to an observer in the front to be walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks. These candlesticks represented the churches, whose duty it was to let their "light shine before men, that others might see their good works, and glorify their Father in heaven;" Matt. v. 16. Christians were called the light of the world. Jesus was the true light; John i. 9; and John the Baptist was "a burning and shining light;" John v. 35; that is, a light of great brilliancy. Perfectly correspondent was it to these figures, which John knew his Lord had used, to represent the seven churches by the seven-fold lamp-bearer in the temple. ¶ *One like unto the Son of man.*—This language is borrowed from Daniel. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him;" vii. 13. This was the title which our Lord took to himself—"Son of man." How is it to be interpreted? Does the word *son* here have the same force that it has in other New Testament combinations in which it is used? Is the term significant of distinction? or does it merely import that Christ was a human being like other men? Perhaps the modesty and humility of Jesus inclined him to use this term in reference to himself, in preference to one of higher distinction; or, perhaps, he used it to signify to the Jews that he was the personage referred to in the prophecy of Daniel. ¶ *Clothed with a garment.*—He is represented as appearing in the

girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine

dress of a Hebrew priest,—a garment, or ephod, reaching down to the feet, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle. For an account of the ephod and the girdle of the priest, see Exod. chapters xxviii. and xxxix. Jesus is well described in the dress of the high priest, as he is the high priest of the Christian profession, “a high priest over the house of God;” Heb. x. 21.

14. *White like wool.*—This description is evidently copied from Daniel. “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire;” Dan. vii. 9. It is Daniel’s description of the appearance of the Son of man. Possibly, the whiteness of the hair is mentioned to add venerableness to the description. ¶ *His eyes.*—His eyes were said to be as a flame of fire, that is, exceedingly brilliant, searching.

15. *And his feet.*—The description of the feet is also copied from Daniel. In describing the eminent messenger that appeared to him in his vision, he said, “His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude;” Dan. x. 6. ¶ *His voice as the sound of many waters.*—This is clearly taken from the verse last quoted. It will be seen, then, that the revelator sought to describe the appearance of the Son of man himself, in the same terms in which

brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his counte-

Daniel had described the heavenly messenger whom he saw. His images were not the product of any wild fancy of his own; he drew them from the sacred books of the Jews. “As the sound of many waters.” The figure here is truly grand. It is borrowed from the Old Testament. See Psal. xxix., “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters; the voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” See also Psal. xciii. Ezekiel’s metaphor is very forcible: “His voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory.” These things are metaphors merely; they have no foundations in fact; they are the appearances which the vivid imaginations of the Hebrew poets supposed the Holy One to assume in the presence of men.

16. *In his right hand seven stars.*—That is, in the hand of him who was in the midst of the seven candlesticks. It has been conjectured by some one, that this figure originated in the circumstance, that the priest, in dressing and lighting the seven golden lamps in the holy place, carried in his right hand a rod with seven miniature lights attached to it, intended for ornament, symmetry, and use. If so, it was natural to say he had in his right hand seven stars, or twinkling lights. They appeared to the beholder like stars. What they represented will be seen under ver. 20. ¶ *Sharp two-edged sword.*—This seems at first an unnatural metaphor,—a sword going out of one’s mouth. We suppose it must have originated in

nance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

this way :— As the word goes out of the mouth, and as it is compared to a sword on account of its potency, piercing even to the heart, so the sword is said to go out of the mouth. Paul, in describing the Christian armor, expressly tells his brethren that the word of God is the “sword of the spirit ;” Eph. vi. 17. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, That “the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword ;” Heb. iv. 12. In Rev. xix. 15, we read that the Son of God riding forth to victory, showeth a sharp sword going out of his mouth. It is a proof of the spiritual nature of the Christian religion, that it has no sword except the “word of God.” The prophecy concerning the Saviour in Isaiah has a similar metaphor. “But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth : and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked ;” Isaiah xi. 4. Here, instead of the sword, we have *the rod* of his mouth. Paul has still a different metaphor, — “the spirit of his mouth.” “And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ;” 2 Thess. ii. 8. “These passages afford considerable light to the expression before us ; and show clearly the nature of the weapons by which our Lord and his church are to gain their victories ; not by the usual instruments of human warfare, but by the preaching of his word in evangelical purity and truth.”—(Woodhouse.) ¶ *His countenance was as the sun.*—It was a very ancient form of blessing the people :—“The Lord bless thee and keep thee : the Lord make *his face shine* upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : the Lord lift up *his countenance* upon thee and give

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he

thee peace ;” Numb. vi. 24—26. Hence comes the prayer, “Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us ;” Ps. iv. 6. See, also, xxi. 6 ; xlii. 5 ; xliv. 3 ; lxxxix. 15. The description of the angel who appeared at the sepulchre at the resurrection of Jesus corresponds with the description of the Son of man. “His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ;” Matt. xxviii. 3. So Christ appeared at the transfiguration. “And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening ;” Luke ix. 29. It seems from all these facts that spiritual beings, and especially visitants from the heavenly world, were represented in the whitest raiment, and with countenances glowing like fire. Such is the appearance of the Son of man described to be in the verses before us. After Moses had communed with God upon the mount, his face shone with brightness. “And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone : and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him ;” Exod. xxxiv. 35. It was perfectly in keeping, therefore, with Scripture metaphors, for the revelator to use the style he did. They were not the product of a wild and unguided fancy in him ; but were figures familiar to him, from his intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament.

17. *Fell at his feet.*—The vision which the revelator had of the glory and power of the Son of man was truly overwhelming. He fell like a man stricken dead. Similar was the effect on Daniel, when the glorious personage appeared to him, whom we have already mentioned. “Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me : for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption,

laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and

and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground;" Dan. x. 8, 9. The revelator evidently copies from Daniel all along in this description. ¶ *He laid his right hand.*—So Daniel: "And behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands;" x. 10. ¶ *Fear not.*—These are the same encouraging words which were spoken to Daniel; x. 12. ¶ *First and the last.*—See on ver. 11.

18. Jesus bade him *fear not*. I am (said he) none other than the first and the last; see i. 11, and ii. 8; "I am he that liveth and was dead;" [surely this is a description of the risen Jesus;] "and am alive for evermore, Amen." ¶ *And have the keys.*—Keys are an emblem of power and government. When Christ gave Peter authority in the kingdom, he said to him, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" Matt xvi. 19. So it is said of Elijah, by the prophet, "I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder;" Isaiah xxii. 21, 22. Jesus is said to have had the keys of hell and of death, because he had power over them. ¶ *Of hell and of death.*—The word hell is not to be understood here as signifying a place of punishment beyond the grave. It signifies the state of the dead. It is the *Sheol* of the Hebrews, the *Hades* of the Greeks; and *Hades* is the word used in this place. To have the keys of hell and of death means, to have

have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

power over death and the grave. In the metaphorical style of the Hebrews, Sheol, or Hades, was regarded as a place, a dark prison, or region, surrounded with walls, and having gates. Jesus spoke of the *gates* of hades; Matt. xvi. 18; and the keys of hades is certainly a corresponding metaphor. Jesus had power over death and the grave. He called up Lazarus from the dead. He had been raised from the dead himself by the power of the Father. All at last shall be made alive in him. He will deliver them from the power of death. Hence he is said to have the keys of death and hades, or hell, the grave.

19. *Write the things.*—Because they were of the utmost importance to the churches. The contents of this book are not light and fanciful, but worthy of deep attention. What was worthy of record, by command of the Son of man, is worthy of the attention of the Christian church. ¶ *Which thou hast seen.*—There were three classes of facts to be recorded. 1st. Those the revelator had seen; 2d. Those which existed at that time; and, 3d. Those which were about to be. It is not possible to divide the book of Revelation to conform to these divisions in all things, though some respect may be paid it. It is very necessary, however, to remember that all which was described in the Apocalypse was not future. We shall have occasion to see this before we get through the book. That part of the book which is principally prophetic commences at the fourth chapter. "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be HEREAFTER. Compare i. 19 with iv. 1.

20. *The mystery of the seven stars.* — We meet with the word *mystery* often in the New Testament. It does not signify something absolutely unintelligible and incomprehensible. The word never bears such a sense in the New Testament. It sometimes signifies a matter hidden, or not fully made manifest; but we are not to suppose it cannot be understood when it is made known. In the case before us, mystery is synonymous with metaphor. The metaphor of the seven stars and seven candlesticks was about to be explained by the Son of man. For further illustration of this sense of the word “mystery,” see the notes on xvii. 5, 7. ¶ *The seven stars.* — Star metaphorically signified a ruler; see Numb. xxiv. 17, and Dan. viii. 10. The revelator (xxii. 16) calls Jesus “the bright and morning star,” shining above all other stars. The seven stars intended the seven angels, or pastors, of the seven Asiatic churches. Jesus held them in his right hand; that is, he had them at his command; he had a rightful control over them. ¶ *Seven candlesticks.* — These are explained to signify the seven churches mentioned in ver. 11, and to whom the epistles recorded in chapters ii. and iii. were addressed. For further, on this point, see the note on Rev. ii. 5.

## CHAPTER II.

1. We have been led by the first chapter to expect to find, as we shall proceed, communications to the seven

## CHAPTER II.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

churches in Asia; and those communications are recorded in chapters ii. and iii. They may be seen as follows:

To the Church at Ephesus, chap. ii. ver. 1—7.	
“ “ Smyrna, ii. 8—11.	
“ “ Pergamos, ii. 12—17.	
“ “ Thyatira, ii. 18—29.	
“ “ Sardis, iii. 1—6.	
“ “ Philadelphia, iii. 7—13.	
“ “ Laodicea, iii. 14—22.	

There are certain features common to all these epistles. 1st. The churches are all assured that it is Jesus, the faithful and true witness, by whom they are addressed, notwithstanding he is described under different titles. 2d. They are all promised a reward, if they will be faithful unto the end, and *overcome* their enemies, or come off victorious in the spiritual contest in which they were engaged. 3d. The whole of them are assured that their works are known to him who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks. 4th. In several cases the faults of the churches are clearly pointed out; and, 5th. Some of them are praised for their good deeds.

By Asia, in the New Testament, is generally meant that part of the quarter of the world bearing the name which we now denominate Asia Minor, and which lies between the Mediterranean on the south, and the Black Sea upon the north. The gospel was early preached here by the apostles and their co-laborers. Paul, after his conversion, preached Christ first at Damascus, afterwards at Jerusalem, then throughout the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles.

## 2 I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and

He travelled and labored much in Asia Minor. Read, in the 13th of Acts, the account of his first labors in Antioch of Pisidia. He preached also in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe; and travelled through the regions of Pisidia and Pamphylia; he carried with him into Asia Minor the decrees from the brethren at Jerusalem; and under his labors, we are told, "that the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily;" Acts xvi. 5. See him again passing through Galatia and Phrygia, and coming to Ephesus. Here he remained three months, in constant visitations to the synagogue, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God;" Acts xix. 1—8. Leaving his accustomed place at the synagogue in consequence of the hardness of some, he entered into the school of one Tyrannus, where he had a wider field of influence, and where he continued for two years. To this school many came from all parts of Asia Minor; and we are told, that by Paul's labors in this station, "all they which dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks;" Acts xix. 10. These remarks will show that the gospel was spread very widely in Asia Minor soon after the conversion of Paul.

### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

1. *Ephesus*.—This was a very celebrated city of Asia Minor, in the western part thereof, and on the borders of the Egean Sea. It was about 40 miles south of Smyrna. It was the capital of the province, and was much celebrated for a magnificent heathen temple, consecrated to the goddess Diana, which was built at the expense of all the provinces of Asia, and occupied 220 years in building. There were certain men in this city who accumulated much wealth by making silver shrines for the goddess, which were, perhaps,

miniature representations of the idol, or of some symbols or forms of worship. Paul's labors in Ephesus bid fair to spoil their business, and they incited the people to a great uproar. "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no Gods which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion;" Acts xix. 24—pt. of 29. Every reader of the New Testament will remember vividly Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders, while he was on the way to make his last visit to Jerusalem. He called them to him, and referred to his past labors and perils among them; that he had faithfully preached the gospel, and urged the people to repentance and faith; that he was on his way to Jerusalem, where he knew not what would befall him, except that everywhere trials and dangers awaited him. "But none of these things move me (said he;) neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my

how thou canst not bear them | which are evil ; and thou hast

face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God ;” Acts xx. 24—27. From these facts it will be seen that Ephesus was a conspicuous place in the early history of the church, both for the labors of some of the most eminent Christians, and for the hatred and violence of the enemies of Christianity. A Christian church was formed there very soon after the conversion of Paul, before which event the gospel had been scarcely preached to the Gentiles at all. The apostle John is also said to have resided, at some period of his life, in this city. ¶ *Angel of the church.* — The word angel is quite often misunderstood. In the minds of Christians it stands almost exclusively for a class of beings higher in nature than men. That it sometimes signifies superhuman intelligences is true ; but not always. “Angel is a name not of nature, but of office,” says Austin, in Leigh’s Crit. Sacra. It oftentimes signifies a human messenger, legate, or agent. — (Parkhurst.) See Matt. xi. 10, where the Greek word is translated *messenger*. See also Mark i. 2. In Luke vii. 24, we read of the “messengers of John,” i. e. angels of John, for the Greek is the same. A similar instance is found, Luke ix. 52. The word angel is used for any messenger whatsoever. The apostles were angels. Inanimate objects are sometimes called angels in the style of the Scriptures. The winds, the flames, scourges, wicked men, armies, when regarded as being sent of God for any purpose, are spoken of by the sacred writers as angels or messengers. It was, therefore, strictly accordant with the style of the rest of the Scriptures, to speak of the bishop, or head of a church, as its angel. Paul tells the Galatians that they received him “as an angel of God ;” Gal. iv. 14. These remarks are sufficient for our purpose

in this place. But we shall have somewhat to say on the *angelology* of the Apocalypse, when we come to the fourth chapter. John introduces angels of all grades, and for all purposes, into his sublime descriptions. This, however, is not the place to classify them. It is sufficient to note here, that by the angel of the church at Ephesus was meant the bishop, or head of that church ; and an epistle to that church was well addressed to the principal officer. ¶ *These things saith he.* — John gives his authority. He does not speak by permission, but utters the instructions of another, by command. He who held the seven stars was Jesus. “He had in his right hand seven stars ;” i. 16. “In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man ;” 13. It was Jesus who bade John write to the angel, or principal spiritual head of the church at Ephesus.

2. *I know thy works.* — The Son of man, in the first place, speaks of those acts of the church which he could approve. I know thy works ; I know what thou hast done, and all that thou hast done. Thou hast been measurably faithful ; thy spiritual taste and sense have been somewhat preserved ; thou canst not bear them which are evil ; thou canst not endure false apostles ; thou hast proved this, for there have been deceivers with thee, endeavoring to lead thee away, claiming to be apostles, and thou hast tried them and found them liars. That the churches of Asia, and other places in the vicinity, were troubled by false apostles in Paul’s day, is evident from some of his epistles. These false apostles gloried and boasted about themselves. He mentioned those boasters, and said, “Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel ; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be

tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars :

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works;" 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. The same author had occasion, also, to mention these false apostles in his epistle to the Galatians; i. 6—9; iii. 1; vi. 12, 13.

3. *And hast borne.* — That is, "Thou hast endured well the trials through which thou hast been called to pass; all that thine enemies have been able to do has not driven thee from the profession of my name. Thou hast borne thy trials with patience, without murmuring against God, without complaining of thy hard lot; and, for my name's sake, for thy regard to me and my cause, thou hast labored and hast not fainted." This is certainly in a strain of commendation. We are to reflect that this church was placed in the very focus of idolatry, and had peculiar difficulties to endure on this account. Although, therefore, some fault is subsequently found, yet, upon the whole, the character which is attributed to it is honorable.

4. *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee.* — But notwithstanding these things I have said in thy favor, all is not right with thee. I am obliged to mention one great fault, viz., "thou hast left thy first love." It is not necessary to infer from what is here said, that this church had formerly had a stronger love than other churches. Neither are we to think that their love to Christ was entirely gone. For if the latter were true, how shall we account for their faith, and patience, and endurance of persecution for Christ's name? All we can suppose

4 Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee

this to mean is, that the ardor of their love had lessened, not that their regard for Christ and his cause was entirely gone. Christianity was as good as ever, and as worthy as ever to be loved. It was a great fault in them to permit their attachment to Christ to cool in any degree. They are not accused of not having any love, but merely of having left "their first love." The love they bore to Christianity was not the love they had when they were first brought to the knowledge of the truth. Our Lord himself prophesied that the love of some would wax cold, when afflictions and trials came upon them. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;" Matt. xxiv. 9—12. The evident meaning is, that they would lose their first love. Jesus required of men supreme love. He was not in such haste to gain converts that he would take them on any conditions. He required men to love him and his cause with all their heart, might, mind, and strength; Matt. xxii. 37—40. He said, on a certain occasion when he saw great multitudes following him, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;" Luke xiv. 25, 26. The meaning here we understand to

quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

be, they were to love Christ and his cause above all things, — above the dearest relatives, yea, above life itself. They must be willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ, if need be. The same doctrine is expressed in different phraseology in Matthew. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me;" x. 37. It will be seen, then, that in the primitive age of the church, disciples were required to love Christ with a *perfect* love. If they had such a love, they would have no fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love;" 1 John iv. 18. The church at Ephesus in the first place had perfect love, but the fervency of it abated. They were not steadfast in their affection, and they left their first love. How many churches are there, even in this day, and in our own happy land, who do not even retain so high a standing as is here ascribed to the church at Ephesus! How many have left their first love! How many are obliged to say,

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!  
How sweet their mem'ry still!  
But they have left an aching void  
The world can never fill."

5. *From whence thou art fallen.* — This shows that the "somewhat" which the Son of man had against this church was no trifling matter. Although it was not absolutely death, yet it would lead to that, if not counteracted. It was a fallen state; it was a state in which it would not do for them to remain. Their first love was the true love, and it should have been cherished. They were called on to remember whence they had fallen; to look back to their first condition as Christians; to sigh for that state

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

again; to repent of their fall, and to do their first works, — the works which marked their early course. This was very important. ¶ *Will remove thy candlestick.* — This figure is borrowed from the preceding chapter. The revelator had seen one like unto the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; i. 13; and we are told that these seven candlesticks were the emblems of the seven churches. 20. The removal of the candlestick, therefore, seems to be put for the final death and extinguishment of the church. Its light should expire. It should no longer hold its place among its sister churches. We are told that this rebuke of the Lord Jesus had the desired effect. We should judge this from Paul's epistle to them. The testimony of Ignatius is to the same effect, given immediately before his martyrdom, and some years after the Apocalypse was written. He states that when other Asiatic churches were becoming corrupt, that of Ephesus was flourishing in a pure faith and practice. — (Epis. ad Ep. sec. 9; Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. 26; iv. 7.) This church continued for some ages in high account among the churches of Christendom; but in time gradually sank into that corruption of doctrine, which has darkened all the churches of that region. Since the desolation of the coast of Asia Minor by Turkish tyranny in the 14th century, Ephesus has become little better than a heap of ruins.

6. *Hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.* — The faults and good deeds of this church were both freely named. Although they had permitted the fervor of their first love to abate, yet there was one thing they had cherished, viz., hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. There is some doubt what this name is derived from. The sect itself unquestionably existed in

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith

the days when the Apocalypse was written; but who they were named for is a harder matter to determine. Some writers suppose they were the followers of "Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch," mentioned in Acts vi. 5. It is thought, with how much reason we cannot determine, that he fell into certain evil practices and errors, which were embraced by those who bore his name. The sect unquestionably was impure. Irenæus alleged against them that they held to a community of women, and were guilty of eating things offered to idols. Too much credit, however, should not be given to the charges which some of the fathers bring against the heretics. If we go not at all beyond the divine record, we can say with certainty, that they were a sect which existed in the revelator's day, and that their deeds were, and ought to have been, detestable in the sight of good Christians. The words "which I also hate," prove that their deeds were probably even more heinous in the sight of the Son of man than in the sight of the partially apostatized church of Ephesus.

7. *He that hath an ear.* — The signification is, he that hath a disposition to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. There were some who did not desire to hear. To hear, in the language of the Scriptures, is to "give ear," to "incline the ear." Some would not hear, and their ears were said to be "uncircumcised;" Jer. vi. 10. Stephen referred to this in his address to the rebellious Jews, on the day of his martyrdom. He seems almost to quote from Jeremiah: "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye;" Acts vii. 51. A deaf ear is an ear that cannot hear, or will not; but an open ear is one that is ready to hear; Isa. xlvi. 8. He that hath an ear to hear, that is, an open ear, or a disposition to

listen, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. This refers to the whole communication of the Spirit to the churches; not to that which precedes only, nor to that which succeeds only. All of it was worthy of attention. ¶ *To him that overcometh.* — This phraseology is peculiarly like the apostle John. He used the word *overcometh* for Christian perseverance and triumph. He learned it of his Master; John xvi. 33. For John's use, see 1 Epis. ii. 13, 14; iv. 4; v. 4, 5; and Apoc. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21. No New Testament writer is distinguished for this phraseology like John. The use of such language shows that the duty of the Christian, especially in the days of the revelator, was considered a contest. He was engaged in a struggle with enemies. This was true of all the Christian churches in the beginning. Paul said to these Ephesians, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" vi. 11, 12. He represents them as engaged in a contest, or struggle; and he tells them that with the shield of faith they shall be able to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;" 16. ¶ *Tree of life.* — This was the reward. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." The metaphor doubtless is drawn from the account of Eden, in the book of Genesis, where we first read of "the tree of life." "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" Gen.

unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of

ii. 8, 9 ; see also 22, 24. Solomon employs the metaphor repeatedly in the book of Proverbs ; iii. 18 ; xi. 30 ; xiii. 12 ; xv. 4. In the New Testament we read nowhere of the "tree of life" except in the Apocalypse.

¶ *In the midst of the paradise of God.*

— This is an exact copy from the description of the garden of Eden in Genesis, where we read that the tree of life was *in the midst* of the garden. In describing the New Jerusalem, John says, "*In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month ; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations ;*" xxii. 2. Again, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city ;" 14. To eat of the tree of life was the reward of overcoming in the Christian warfare. The whole is metaphorical ; and describes the rich blessings of the gospel. The tree of life is said to be in the midst of the paradise of God, or New Jerusalem. He who fell away from the purity of the gospel, could not, of course, eat of the fruit of this tree ; but those who maintained their devotedness to God and his truth, enjoyed continually its fruit. This is the same as the fruit of the Spirit ; Gal. v. 22, 23. None could partake of this fruit, except such as overcame the world. The lesson taught is, that he who would enjoy the full advantages of Christianity, or, in other words, "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," must be faithful at all times, and thus overcome the world.

*Paradise.* — This is the only instance of this word in the Apocalypse. It occurs in two other places in the New Testament, viz., Luke xxiii. 43 ; and 2 Cor. xii. 4. It is a very ancient word, and is neither of Hebrew nor Greek origin, but Persian.

It signified originally, a beautiful garden, park, or inclosure. In the Septuagint, the word is used to signify the garden of Eden. In the Saviour's time the Jews had it in common use to signify the state of departed souls, — a region in *hades*, the state of the dead. It is another name for what is called "Abraham's bosom." That it belonged to *hades* is evident from the following facts : It is said that Christ, at his death, went to *hades*, or hell, that is, the state of the dead. At his resurrection, he was said to leave that state or place. Peter applied to him the prophecy, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption ;" Acts ii. 27. When our Lord was on the cross, and the dying thief (thinking perhaps that Christ would deliver himself from his enemies, and establish his kingdom on earth) said to him, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," Jesus replied, and cut off all the thief's hopes of deliverance, that they were both on that day to die. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise ;" to-day shall we both enter the state of the dead. What Peter called *hades*, or hell, Jesus called *paradise*. The Jews believed in distinctions in the conditions of men in that state ; but there is no proof that our Lord meant to recognize those distinctions. When he spoke of "Abraham's bosom," Luke xvi. 22, it is not to be supposed he referred to the immortal state, but to the communion which the true believer had with the faith of Abraham ; and it is to be understood as parallel with the words, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven ;" Matt. viii. 11 ; Luke xiii. 28, 29. The whole figure is designed to show this one thing only, that believers sat down to the same gospel feast of which the patriarchs by faith partook. This was a strong argu-

the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

ment to present to a Jew. As the Christians at Ephesus, who labored and struggled in the Christian contest, and *overcame*, were admitted to the richest privileges of the gospel, to an intimate communion with God, they were supposed to have arrived at that state to which Adam, in the garden, was forbidden to go. He had a right to every tree of the garden but two, viz., the "tree of knowledge," and the "tree of life." By partaking of the former, he violated his Maker's command; and lest he should partake of the latter, and live forever, he was expelled from the garden; Gen. iii. 22—24. Now it was declared of the faithful Christians, that they had everlasting life; John iii. 36; v. 24; 1 John iii. 14. The unbeliever remained in death. He had not partaken of the "tree of life." John dwells much on this fact, that the believer had everlasting life. "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;" John vi. 33. Again, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever;" Idem. 48—51. Adam and Eve, as we have shown, were refused that intimate communion with God signified by eating of "the tree of life." John, who sought to seize on almost every glowing and striking metaphor of the Old Testament, took up this one of the "tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God;" and wishing to exalt the faithful Christian, in his description, to the highest degree of bliss, he carries him where Adam was not permitted to go, and lets him eat of that tree whose fruit Adam did not taste. But, as we have said, the whole is metaphorical, and describes

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write; These

in a gorgeous and enchanting manner, the bliss which the faithful Christian had in his soul.

#### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA.

8. *Smyrna*. — We will look first at its present condition. Smyrna was the place still known by that name. It is an ancient and celebrated city and seaport of Asia Minor, the greatest emporium of Western Asia, on the west side of the Meles, a stream which, although of small dimensions, has acquired an immortality of renown, at the bottom of a gulf of its own name. The whole seven of the churches mentioned in the Apocalypse were in the western part of Asia Minor, and lay within a circle of about one hundred and fifty miles in diameter. There is not one within whose precincts the trumpet of the gospel now gives so distinct and certain a sound. While in this city Mohammed is acknowledged in twenty mosques, and Jews assemble in several synagogues, the faith of the Messiah is taught in an Armenian, five Greek, and two Roman Catholic churches, and in two Protestant chapels, one connected with the English, the other with the Dutch consulate. — See Elliott's Travels. It was a very ancient city. Christianity flourished there early; but the place is mentioned in Scripture only in Rev. i. 11, and ii. 8. The famous Polycarp was one of its earliest, if not, in fact, its earliest bishop. It is believed by some he was appointed by John, the author of the Apocalypse, with whom he was in part contemporary. He suffered martyrdom here at a very advanced age, in consequence of his devotion to the Christian religion. He had reason to expect it from the warnings given to the church at Smyrna in the Apocalypse. This church sent her bishops to the councils of the Christian church

things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive ;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the

for many centuries ; but sunk under the common catastrophe of maritime Asia in the 14th century. Having continued a mart for European traffic, it is to this day a city of considerable population, and contains people of many nations. ¶ *The angel of the church.*—This officer has been described under ii. 1. The word angel is usually understood to signify a heavenly messenger, a superhuman being. Some have thought, therefore, it were better to translate the Greek word by *messenger* here. But Dr. Campbell has shown that *messenger* would render the expression ambiguous, if not improper. The messenger of societies (in like manner as of individuals) is one sent by them, not to them. In this, and some other instances, the Greek *angelos* is to be understood as denoting a minister, or servant employed in any charge of importance and dignity, though not a message. It would, therefore, be no deviation from what is included in the Hellenistic sense of the word, if in all the cases in which we read of the angel of the church it were rendered *president*. ¶ *The first and the last.*—The same glorious personage addressed the angel of the church in Smyrna who had addressed the angel of the church at Ephesus, only different titles are employed.—See i. 17, 18. It was evidently the Son of man, whose death and resurrection were both referred to. How must that church have been impressed with the words, coming, as they did, from such a source—how much must they have been comforted by them in view of the persecutions by which they were threatened.

9. *I know thy works.*—Jesus knew their works, as he did those of the Ephesian church ; ii. 2. He knew all that they had done. Their zeal, their remissness, their fidelity ;

in fact, whatever they had felt, or had done, was all known to him. Their tribulations, all that they had suffered, was known to him. Their poverty was known to him. They were not rich in this world's goods ; but there was a very important sense in which they were rich. They were "rich toward God ;" Luke xii. 21. The poor may be "rich in faith ;" Jas. ii. 5. A man who believes in Christ, and who does his duty faithfully at all times, is rich, whatever his worldly condition may be. Take Moses as an example. He was rich toward God. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward ;" Heb x. 24—26. ¶ *I know the blasphemy.*—The Son of man, after having stated that he knew the works of the church, proceeds to say that he knew the works of their enemies also. He knew the blasphemy of the false Jews. Blasphemy is the worst kind of evil speaking. It is railing against God. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was the attributing of the miracles of Jesus, which were performed by the agency of that Spirit, to Beelzebub ; See Mark iii. 29, 30. It was the Jews who committed this sin, though we know not that it is the sin which is specially referred to in the verse before us. ¶ *Which say they are Jews.*—These were probably Jews in the outward sense, for there were many in Smyrna ; but they were not Jews in the true sense. They kept up the worship of the synagogue, but it was so polluted, that the synagogue was called the synagogue of Satan. They are not all Israel, who

blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some

are of Israel; Rom. ix. 6; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; 7. Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile; John i. 47. St. Paul says, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God;" Rom. ii. 28, 29. The Jews in Smyrna were Jews by birth and profession, but they were not what Jews ought to have been. They were banded together in the service of Satan, and hence were said to be "the synagogue of Satan," as Christians are said to be the house, or church, of the living God. They were the instigators in all persecutions against the Christians. They stirred up the people of heathen cities against the primitive preachers of Christianity. In the most of cases, where we read of the persecutions of the apostles, we find that the Jews were the instigators and ringleaders in the matter. Nevertheless, they were very punctual in their observance of the rites of the synagogue. It was a strange mixture of synagogue service with the service of Satan; they were, therefore, called the "synagogue of Satan."

10. *Fear none of those things.*—The Lord Jesus refers to the sufferings that were about to come upon Christians. These wicked Jews, the synagogue of Satan, it was well known would persecute them. The Jews had been the persecutors of the Christians from the time the gospel was first preached; and after the death of the Lord Jesus, when the apostles, under the great commission, went out to preach the gospel in all the world, they were met and buffeted by the

Jews. The Jews were scattered throughout all cities; and, as has been said, were the instigators and ringleaders in all persecutions. See 2 Thess. ii. 14, 15; and especially Acts xvii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 13. They had always been instrumental in casting the Christians into prison. They imprisoned Peter and John; Acts v. 18, 19, 21. Saul, before his conversion, was a zealous Pharisee, and assisted in haling the Christians to prison; Acts viii. 3; xxvi. 10. The severity of the Roman officers towards the Christians was greatly pleasing to the Jews; Acts xii. 3, 4. ¶ *The devil shall cast.*—And what *devil* was this which should cast the Christians into prison, other than the Jews, the synagogue of Satan, who had been mentioned in the preceding verse? The word *diabolos*, here rendered devil, signifies *accuser, slanderer*. It is put for any adversary; and is often used metaphorically in the New Testament. The heathens believed in a principal leader among their spirits of darkness; and their notions on this subject, especially after the return from the Babylonish captivity, infected the Jews. The metaphors of the Apocalypse, in some cases, are drawn from these opinions; not to recognize the opinions as true, any more than Isaiah meant to acknowledge the heathen notions of *hades* to be true, in his sublime apostrophe to the king of Babylon; xiv. 9 *et seq.* Dr. Macknight, in treating on the parable of Dives and Lazarus, says, "If from these resemblances it is thought the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, it will not at all follow that our Lord approved of what the common people thought or spake concerning those matters, agreeably to the notions and language of the Greeks. In parabolical discourses, provided the doctrines inculcated *re*

of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have

strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of the vulgar, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with."—(Par. and Com. on Luke xvi.) The principle of interpretation which Dr. Macknight here lays down is evidently sound; and we shall have occasion to refer to it again in the course of this work. The word *diabolos* is often put for a human adversary in the New Testament, and is sometimes used as a metaphor for a ruling, persecuting power. Let the following facts be considered:—Jesus called Judas, *diabolos*, a devil. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" John vi. 70. Wicked people are called the children of the devil, in the same sense that the poor and sorrowful are called the children of sorrow and want. Thus Elymas was the child of the devil; Acts xiii. 10. The word *diabolos* is put for the opponents of the Christian religion in the days of Christ and his apostles. Hence, when Paul exhorted the Ephesians to "put on the whole armor of God, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of *diabolos*," he explained immediately his meaning, by saying, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, *against spiritual wickedness in high places*;" Eph. vi. 11, 12. Paul exhorted the wives of Christians to be grave, not (*diaboloï*) devils, but sober, faithful in all things; 1 Tim. iii. 11. The translators of the common version have rendered the word here, not devils, but *slanderers*. The word devil signifies a wicked human being. Hence Paul says in another place, speaking of the prevalence of wickedness, that "men shall be lovers of their own *selves*, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful*, unholy, without natural

affection, truce-breakers, *DEVILS* (*diaboloï*;) "2 Tim. iii. 3. In the common version it is translated *false accusers*; and in Titus ii. 3, the word *diaboloï* is translated, not devils, but *false accusers*. We have said before, that the opposers of the early Christians were called the devil. So in the verse before us: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, *THE DEVIL* shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Now this is no *Diabolos*, *THE DEVIL*; and this is the designation given by the revelator to the leading persecutors of the church. So the great dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, is nothing more than exalted human wicked power,—the exalted enemies of the church; and when that devil is chained in the bottomless pit, it represents the restraining of that power.—See Rev. xii. 9, 12; xx. 2, 10. From the whole, it seems evident, that by *the devil* is intended the leading persecuting power; or, as Paul hath it, the persecuting principalities and powers, and the spiritual wickedness in high places; Eph. vi. 11, 12. In what other sense can we understand the word *devil* in the case before us? He cast the Christians *into prison*? Did not the leading persecuting power do this? It may be said, in reply, truly the Jews, the persecuting power, were the devil's agents. He tempted them to do it; and for that reason he is said to do it. To this, we reply: We learn from St. James, that when men are tempted, they are not to ascribe the temptation to anything beyond themselves. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed;" Jas. i. 14. If men will have due guard over their own appetites and passions, they need not, according to St. James, fear any other source of temptation. Lust bringeth forth sin, and sin bringeth forth death. ¶ *That ye may be tried*

tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will

—That is, *proved*, whether ye are able to endure affliction. The Christians were referred to the prophets as examples of patience in the midst of affliction; James v. 10. The church in Smyrna was, by God's permission, to suffer much affliction. God allowed this to try them, as gold is tried by being melted in the furnace. Job said, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;" xxiii. 10. See also Dan. xii. 10; Zech. xiii. 9. "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is;" 1 Cor. iii. 13. Peter speaks of this trial, in his epistle to the strangers scattered through the provinces of Asia Minor. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ;" 1 Epis. i. 7; iv. 12. See also Rev. iii. 10. ¶ *Ten days.* — That exactly ten days are here meant, we should not suppose would be contended for by any one. The word days is used indefinitely in the Scriptures, and numbers are certainly so used in the Apocalypse. We understand by this phrase, "You shall have a brief season of tribulation." Ten seems to be put for a small number. "And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go;" Gen. xxiv. 55. The evident import of the phrase is, a short time. See Daniel i. 12—15. ¶ *Unto death.* — But notwithstanding the time was short, it might result in death. The early Christians were frequently called on to suffer death for the cause of Christ; but neither life nor death could separate them from the love of God; Rom. viii. 38, 39. Paul says, the apostles, as it were, were appointed to death; 1 Cor. iv. 9. ¶ *Crown of life.* — To encourage the members of the church at Smyrna to be "faithful unto death," the revelator promises them that they shall be

rewarded with a "crown of life." It is an interesting question, what is intended by the "crown of life?" The expression occurs twice only in the Scriptures, viz., in James i. 12, and in the passage before us. By carefully consulting the Scriptures, it will be seen that the figure of the crown is used to signify dignity, honor, glory. When Job was stripped of his glory, he said, "He hath taken the crown from my head;" Job xix. 9. Solomon says, Wisdom shall "give to thy head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee; Prov. iv. 9. Here the crown was the glory which Wisdom conferred. So "a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;" (Prov. xii. 4,) i. e., she confers dignity and honor upon him. See also xiv. 18, "The prudent are crowned with knowledge," and xvi. 31, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." No one will think of looking exclusively to the immortal state to find the crown mentioned in these instances. In the Grecian games, from which Paul drew his figure of the crown, (see 1 Cor. ix. 25,) the victor was crowned with flowers or foliage. This was a corruptible crown, i. e., it would fade away; but the Christian's crown is incorruptible, and fadeth not away. Now, what is the Christian's crown? It is his Christian virtues and graces; for it is these surely which are his honor, dignity and glory; and such things can never fade. And where does the Christian have this crown? — Answer: Wherever he is found faithful. His faithfulness is a crown of glory to him. Paul had his crown in this life, as every other good man has. He said to the Philippians, ye are "my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved;" iv. 1. He asked the Thessalonians, on one occasion, what his crown was; and let us look well to the answer: "For what is our hope, or joy, or

give thee a crown of life.

crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye [our crown] in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" He then answers, "Ye ARE our glory and joy." See 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. The converts made to Christ through Paul's instrumentality were an honor and glory and joy to him — they were HIS CROWN. When he drew towards the end of life, he reflected more deeply upon this crown. Christ, he thought, would confirm it to him; and sanction his claim to honor in the church. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing;" 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. His crown was his faithfulness and the success of his labors in the church — these were glory and honor to him. He could not be deprived of that crown. True, it was not then so generally acknowledged an honor to be a faithful Christian as it was afterwards, when Christ came to exalt his church, and cast down his foes; — and hence it is said, the Lord would give it to him at that day. Peter said to the elders, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." This was certainly on the earth, where the chief Shepherd appeared; and when he came, the merits of his followers were made manifest. The term "crown of life" is to be explained on the principles here laid down: it was the dignity, glory, honor of the Christian life; which would be made to appear to be truly glorious and honorable at the coming of the Lord, when every man should be rewarded according to his works. And if any man died before the coming of Christ, he would not lose the crown, provided he remained faithful unto death. Paul, Peter, and the

11 He that hath an ear let

rest of the apostles, Stephen, and many others, wear this crown of life now. We see it on their heads; it is radiant with glory, like a crown of stars; it can never fade away. Paul tells us explicitly when he expected to have this crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me (when?) at *that day*; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love *his appearing*." Here are two circumstances which assist us to a right understanding of the subject, viz., the phrase *that day*, and *the appearing* of Christ. He says, in another place, that God shall judge the quick and the dead (i. e., those who were dead in sins and those who had been quickened out of their sins; see Eph. ii. 1) "at his appearing and his kingdom;" 2 Tim. iv. 1. Does not this language evidently apply to Christ's appearing in power to set up his kingdom at the end of the law? It was then that Christ was to judge men; see Matt. xvi. 27; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1. And that event certainly was to take place during the lifetime of some who were on the earth when the Saviour spake; Matt. xvi. 28. His *appearing* then took place. "Then shall *appear* the sign of the Son of man in heaven;" Matt. xxiv. 30. And in order to impress on those who listened, the solemn fact that the *appearing* would take place in that generation, Jesus adds, ver. 34, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Peter connects the crown with Christ's *appearing*, in the same manner with Paul. "When the chief Shepherd shall *appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" 1 Peter v. 4. We have now put these facts into a form in which they will, we think, be understood. The *crown* was certainly to be conferred at the *appearing* of Christ; and the *appearing* of Christ was at

him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that

the full establishment of his *kingdom*, at the end of the Mosaic law.

It is not supposed that all the Christians were then *personally* present before the Son of God. He was not *personally* present himself on earth at that time. It was not an outward, visible, tangible crown which the faithful Christians were to receive; but it was then to be made manifest to the world, by the establishment of the gospel and the overthrow of the Jewish nation and religion, that the Christians *were right*; that they had labored in a *just* cause; that they had fought a good fight; that their steadfastness was not in vain. This was a crown, full of brilliant gems. They had been cast down and trodden under foot. Their enemies had triumphed over them. They desired no other crown than to be fully vindicated before the world, — their course approved, — their doctrine established, — the faith they had kept made triumphant. That was a crown indeed!

What a bright halo of glory has encircled the head of Paul (to make him the representative of many others) ever since the appearing and kingdom of the Lord Jesus. He has been honored, and forever will be honored, by the church of God. His name has been written on her banners in letters of light. Although so great a persecutor before his conversion, although born out of due time, yet he has been associated with Jesus and the apostles in the affections of the church universal. His *crown* was not personal aggrandizement, for that his soul did not desire; but it was the high satisfaction of standing vindicated before the world as having kept the true faith, as having defended a righteous cause, as having fought a good fight, as having labored for the advantage of the world.

11. *He that hath an ear.* — This shows that what the revelator had uttered was worthy of deep consideration. It was not for the un-

thinking multitude; they would not discern its import; it was for those who had ears to hear, — i. e., ears that were open to hear. Such were called upon particularly to take notice of what was said. Dr. Campbell says "that Jesus Christ never employs the words, 'He that hath ears to hear,' &c., in the introduction or conclusion of any plain moral instructions, but always after some parable, or prophetic declarations figuratively expressed." — Dis. II., part iii., sec. 5.

¶ *What the Spirit saith.* — John spoke by the spirit. The spirit of the risen Son of God was with him to guide him into all truth; Rev. i. 10. This spirit was "the spirit of truth," "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him;" John xiv. 17. ¶ *Overcometh.* — The style here, as we have had occasion to show before, is peculiarly that of the apostle John; 1 Epis. v. 4, 5. ¶ *Second death.* — This phrase occurs nowhere except in the book of Revelation; see ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8; and these are all the instances of its occurrence. And what is the "second death?" We shall give a direct answer, in the language of Scripture. Rev. xx. 14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH." And again, in Rev. xxi. 8: "But the fearful and unbelieving, &c., . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH." Here we feel confident, that to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone was the second death. The revelator, at the time he mentioned the "second death," in the case before us, had been speaking of the rebellious and persecuting Jews, "the synagogue of Satan." That the Jews as a nation were cast into the lake of fire when their city was destroyed the second time, will be evident to every one who will read Ezek. xxii. 18—22. See also Isa.

overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

xxxi. 9: "The Lord's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." They suffered the second death, then, — an utter, total death, — at the time of the entire overthrow and extinction of their nation. "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death;" i. e., he that is faithful through all tribulations, shall not be involved in the general calamity which is about to fall on the Jews, and on all the enemies of Christ. Let the reader examine the following passages, and he will see that the terms "fire and brimstone" are terms frequently employed by the sacred writers to describe the judgments of God in the present life; Gen. xix. 24; Deut. xxix. 23; Job xviii. 15; Ps. xi. 6; Isa. xxx. 33; xxxiv. 9, 10; Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Luke xvii. 29. For further remarks on the second death, see our comments on Rev. xx. 6, 14; and xxi. 8.

#### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS.

12. *Angel*. — See the notes on ii. 1 and 8. ¶ *Pergamos*. — This place is mentioned but twice in the Scriptures; Rev. i. 11; ii. 12. It was a celebrated city of antiquity, the most important place in Mysia, and the most northerly of the places that contained the seven apocalyptic churches. It probably existed eight or ten centuries before Christ. It was famed for its library, which yielded only to that of Alexandria in extent and value, and it is said to have contained upwards of two hundred thousand volumes. It was the birth-place of the celebrated Galen, and in its vicinity there was a famous temple of Æsculapius. The modern town

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain

retains the name of Bergamo, Bergamah, or Bergma. ¶ *He which hath the sword with two edges*. — This is a reference to the Son of man; see i. 16; and to the notes on that text we refer the reader.

13. *I know thy works*. — This was said to the whole seven of the churches. ¶ *Where thou dwellest*. — The place is specially referred to, as if for some reason it was worthy of particular observation. The peculiarity is brought out in the next words. ¶ *Where Satan's seat is*. — That is, his location, his place of influence and power. There had been a great opposition to Christianity there. It was a place of great heathen strength. The immense library was there, which perhaps brought together the heathen and Jewish scholars from all parts of Asia, Greece, and the more western parts of the world. This would tend to give character and strength to the opposition to Christianity. The word Satan has much the same general use in the Scriptures as *diabolos*, or devil. In the case before us it is used for the adversaries collectively at Pergamos. Peter was the Satan when he opposed his master; Matt. xvi. 23; Mark viii. 33. In one case Satan seems to signify a disease; Luke xiii. 16. But when Paul says, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20, he refers undoubtedly to the human adversaries of Christianity. The word seems also to bear the same sense in 1 Thess. ii. 18: "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul once and again; but Satan hindered us." We do not suppose F. 1 meant

among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to

eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and

that some invisible, intangible, malicious agent had power enough over him to succeed for a length of time in hindering him against his will from doing his duty. We shall define Satan's seat then to be the place of a powerful and wicked opposition to Christianity. And yet the church as a body stood fast. ¶ *Hast not denied my faith.*—They did not abandon the name of Christ, and they held fast his faith, even in those terrible days when Antipas was slain. Dr. Hammond tells us that Antipas was cotemporary with the apostles; that he was bishop of the church of Pergamos, and that in his very old age he fed and ruled the flock in all godliness. He was a faithful martyr, and was slain where Satan dwelt. It is certain from the text that he was a Christian, that he was faithful even unto death, and that he was slain at Pergamos as a witness of Jesus. The character bestowed upon this church was, in general, very honorable to them.

14. *But I have a few things against thee.*—Notwithstanding the praise which had been bestowed upon them, there were some things among them that were wrong. They had not divorced themselves from those who held the error of Balaam. And what was that? Balaam taught Balak king of the Moabites, "to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel." See Numb. xxxi. 16: "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." Balaam was not in all

things faithful. He led the children of Israel somewhat into idolatry and uncleanness. There were men like him in the church at Pergamos, who were willing to compromise with their heathen neighbors, for the gratification of their lusts. Persons of this description are mentioned by Peter, 2 Epis. ii. 10—15, and Jude 4.

15. *Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.*—This church differed from the church at Ephesus. The latter hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, but the church at Pergamos had those among them who held the doctrines of that sect. Who these were, and what were their faults, will be seen by the notes on ver. 6.

16. *Repent.*—This is a word of wide import. It signifies not only to change the mind, not only to have sorrow for past misdeeds or neglects, but to reform the life. Thus the church at Ephesus was called on to "repent, and do the first works," ver. 5; i. e., reform their lives, and get back again to duty and faithfulness.

¶ *Come unto thee quickly.*—See what is said on this topic in the notes on i. 1, 3. It is remarkable how particular the Son of man was to show that his coming in judgment was not distant. See, also, Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27.

¶ *Sword of my mouth.*—This is a reference to what is said i. 16; "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." This two-edged sword was the word of God. The word of God is repeatedly represented by a sword. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," said Paul, Eph. vi. 17. The author of the epistle to

will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat

of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

18 And unto the angel of the

the Hebrews employs a comparison instead of a metaphor. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" Heb. iv. 12. The word of God being the sword, is said to be the sword of the mouth. By that word they would be condemned, if they did not reform.

17. *He that hath an ear.*—See the remarks on verses 7 and 11 of this chapter. ¶ *Hidden manna.*—The manna was that food from heaven by which the children of Israel were sustained in their forty years' journey through the wilderness. It was a favorite custom of the apostle John to represent the gospel under the figure of food. He learned it of his Master. Jesus called himself the bread of God, that came down from heaven to give life to the world. It was the same style of metaphor to represent the gospel by manna, — hidden, not visible manna. This may have reference to the manna being kept in a pot in the temple; or it may mean spiritual manna, such as is not visible to the outward sense of sight. In ver. 7 we read that he who overcame should "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." The hidden manna is another metaphor to describe the same thing. The intention was, to signify that the Christians who were faithful under the trials described in the Apocalypse, should be entitled to, and should enjoy, the highest delights of the gospel. ¶ *White stone.*—This was a mark of honor. The stone here referred to was a beautiful white tab-

let. It was a sign of worth and purity. The figure perhaps was drawn from the breast-plate of the high priest, which had four rows of precious stones, three in each row, and on each stone was engraved the name of one of the tribes. In this way Aaron bore the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart, when he went in before the Lord. He thus presented them justified in God's sight; Exod. xxviii. 29, 30. God threatened the Jews who showed signs of idolatry, that he would destroy them, "and blot out their name from under heaven;" Deut. ix. 14. Here are the opposites. Those who forsook the true God, and turned to idolatry, were to have their names blotted out; while those who were faithful to the end, and kept themselves free and uncontaminated by the idolatry by which they were surrounded, should have a new name, a more honored name, which, like the names of the tribes on the breast-plate of judgment, should be engraved on a stone, white as a sign of purity and honor. And this name should be a pass-word to glory and distinction. None should know it, except him who received it. It could not, therefore, be counterfeited; and it was a sure security to the individual who possessed it that his honors should never be lost.

#### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA.

18. *Thyatira.*—This was a considerable city, not a great distance from Pergamos, and in the way from the latter place to Sardis. It is mentioned in Acts xvi. 14, where we are told that the pious Lydia, who received Paul and Silas at Philippi,

church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith,

belonged to Thyatira. The modern name of it is Akhissar. Smith and Dwight, the American missionaries at Armenia, state that its aspect is poor and mean, that it has of late been built up of wood, and that it probably has not more than five thousand inhabitants, of whom fifteen hundred may be Greeks. Mr. Elliott, in his Travels, gives a more favorable account, and represents the inhabitants to be nearly double the number given above. Perhaps, says McCulloch, the truth may lie between these conflicting statements. ¶ *Son of God.*—This is the only instance of this phrase in the Apocalypse. We find the expression in all the New Testament; but no writer employs it so often as John; see Gos. i. 34; iii. 18; v. 25; ix. 35; x. 36; xi. 4; xix. 7; xx. 31; 1 Epis. iii. 8; iv. 15; v. 5, 10, 13, 20. By the use of this phrase in the case before us, we are distinctly told that the glorious personage mentioned in chapter i. as being “like the Son of man,” was the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare i. 14, 15, with ii. 18. This will verify the fact completely. In both cases his eyes are said to be as flames of fire, and his feet as fine brass.

19. *I know thy works.*—It will be seen that *works* are twice referred to in this verse. We think the sense of the verse is this: “I know thy works in general,—thy charity, thine administering to others, thy faith, thy patience,—these are thy works. ¶ *And the last more than the first.*—Two seasons are here referred to, viz., the season before, and the season during, tribulation. In the last, the church at Thyatira appeared to more advantage than in the first. This

and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first:

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a

was an excellent commendation, and was the reverse of what was said to the church at Ephesus, verses 4, 5. Still the church at Thyatira was not perfect. Their last state, on the whole, was better than the first, but it was not wholly without fault.

20. *That woman Jezebel.*—The Jezebel, by way of distinction, was the wife of Ahab, mentioned in the 1st and 2d books of Kings. She led her husband into idolatry, slew the prophets of the true God, entertained the prophets of Baal, in great numbers, at her own table, and at last came to a miserable death. She was a woman of great impurities. The name Jezebel occurs only once in the Apocalypse. It is not probable there was a person at Thyatira by that name; but it is used metaphorically, either for some corrupt woman who had so great an influence in the church that she could not be expelled, or for a body of false teachers. As the Jezebel mentioned by the revelator is said to have claimed to be “a prophetess,” she was probably some influential female, called by that name, because her character and influence were like those of Jezebel of olden time, exceedingly bad. She seduced God’s servants to commit fornication, which may be understood literally or metaphorically, for unfaithfulness to God, and impurity in the matter of faith. ¶ *Eat things sacrificed unto idols.*—Among other vices she seduced God’s servants to eat things sacrificed unto idols. This has been before mentioned as one of the errors of Balaam; see ver. 14. When the early Christians became convinced that it was the purpose of God to receive the Gentiles into the

prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great

tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and

church, the first among the duties impressed upon them seems to have been, that they should "abstain from meats offered to idols;" Acts xv. 20, 29. This prohibition was not given, probably, because the church supposed the food was in itself rendered injurious, but because the reception and constant use of it would lessen the horror of idolatry, which all the holy men of old had sedulously sought to preserve in God's people. The hope of redeeming the world from idolatry was vested in them. Every barrier, therefore, to the ingress of that species of false religion was kept up. The influence of the Gentiles, at their admission into the church, was feared on these accounts. They were required, therefore, as a matter of great importance, that they should not eat the food that had been connected with idolatrous sacrifices; see Acts xxi. 25. Paul did not regard the eating of this food as vicious in itself, but the influence of it was decidedly bad; see the whole eighth chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians; see also same Epis. x. 19, 28. The influence of Jezebel, then, was decidedly heathenish. The fornication mentioned was perhaps that which was metaphorically so called; for when the Jews worshipped the idols of the heathen, they were said to go a whoring after other gods; Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Lev. xx. 5, 6; Deut. xxxi. 16; Psal. lxxiii. 27; Ezek. vi. 9. We are inclined to think this is the sense in which fornication is to be understood in the case before us,

being coupled as it is with eating "things sacrificed unto idols."

21. *She repented not.* — She was forborne with, but she reformed not her life; and she deserved, therefore, severe punishment.

22. *Will cast her into a bed.* — A bed of affliction is intended, as the parallelism shows, to wit, "into great tribulation." The style of the metaphor is kept up. Fornication was used metaphorically for heathenish practices, and casting into a bed is put for being thrown into great tribulation. Nothing would save her from this but a thorough reformation of life.

23. *And I will kill her children with death.* — Children seems here put for followers. To kill with death is a Hebraism, signifying utter, thorough death. Her name shall rot; her followers shall die; and her punishment shall be so signal and remarkable that "all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Such was to be her fate. ¶ *According to her works.* — This is the principle on which divine retribution is inflicted, as we shall take occasion to show in another place, if our limits will allow; see, for our present purpose, Psal. lxii. 12; Jer. l. 29; Hos. xii. 2; Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 15; Rev. xx. 12. Thus we see that the principle referred to is recognized both in the Old Testament and the New.

24. *This doctrine.* — Viz. he doc-

unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden:

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

trine of Jezebel, which she had taught. They had suffered her to teach her errors, ver. 20, by which she had seduced God's servants to spiritual fornication, and led them to eat things sacrificed to idols. Upon those in Thyatira who had not this doctrine, God would put no other burden than that which he had already enjoined upon them, viz., that of rooting the influence of Jezebel out of the church.

¶ *Depths of Satan, as they speak.*—They, of course, did not acknowledge them to be depths of Satan; but they called them *depths*, i. e., profound matters. The Greek word for depths is not of very frequent occurrence in the New Testament. It may be found, Matt. xiii. 5; Mark iv. 5; Luke v. 4; Rom. viii. 39; xi. 33. In 1 Cor. ii. 10, it is put for "the deep things of God." See also 2 Cor. viii. 2; Eph. iii. 18. The heathen boasted much of their deep mysteries, which were connected with their idolatrous practices, and to this boasting it seems probable the revelator refers.

25. *But that which ye have already.*—Viz., those things which had been commended in them,—their works, their charity, their service, faith and patience; ver. 19. They were directed to hold these fast until the coming of the Son of man. ¶ *Till I come.*—This is the language Christ employed to denote his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem; John xxi. 22, 23. "The time was not far distant when they might expect this."—(Prof. Stuart.) See also the long and valuable note of Dr. Hammond on this place, who defines the end, (ver. 26,) and the coming, (ver. 25,)

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers :) even as I

as referring to the coming of Christ for the destruction of the Jews, and the judging of the nations according to their works.

26. *He that overcometh, to him will I give power over the nations.*—You shall go out and propagate the gospel, and reign spiritually in the hearts of men.

27. *Rod of iron.*—The power of the gospel shall break them in pieces, like a potter's vessel. This is evidently a quotation from the 2d Psalm, where it is said of Jesus that he shall break the nations with a rod of iron, (or iron sceptre,) and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and hence it is said in Revelation, "He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." ¶ *Even as I received of my Father.*—Is not this a direct reference to the authority given him in that Psalm? Wherein does Jesus rule the nations and dash them in pieces? Not as an earthly monarch, but as a spiritual ruler. How are the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ? In what sense is Jesus to reign forever and ever? Not as an outward prince. He reigned when in his flesh, in all his humility; he reigned even on the cross; yes, when dying, he reigned with greater power than at any other time. His followers shall reign with him; the saints shall judge the world, and overturn the ancient order of things, until Jesus shall be everywhere acknowledged.

28. *The morning-star.*—To get the sense here, observe that the Son of God was encouraging the faithful

received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning-star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Christians at Thyatira with the promise that they should share the glories and honors belonging to himself. He shared the glories and honors of the Father, and they should share the glories and honors of the Son. Jesus said, when on earth, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" John xvii. 5. This primitive glory might be called the glory of the morning stars, because it was when the foundations of the earth were laid, that "the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" Job xxxviii. 6, 7. The same glory was to be shared by Christ's faithful followers. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;" John xvii. 24. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one;" Idem. 22. Hence Jesus promised to his followers, that they should reign with him in his kingdom, and like him sway the nations with an iron sceptre. Their glory should be like his glory. Daniel, whose style the revelator closely imitates, had said, "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever;" xii. 3. In chap. i. 16, it had been said of the Son of man, "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." The Christians were called "the light of the world;" Matt. v. 14. Jesus, being preëminently the light of the church, called himself "the bright and morning-star;" Rev.

## CHAPTER III.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and

xxii. 16. But even this glory he was willing to share with his followers. "I will give him that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end," i. e., unto the time when I come, "the morning-star." "He shall share my full glory, the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I will clothe him with radiance like that of the morning-star."

29. *He that hath an ear.*—See the notes on verses 7, 11, 17.

## CHAPTER III.

### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS.

1. *Angel.*—The angel of the church was its minister, or presiding officer. See the notes on ii. 1, 8, 12, 18. Paul was an angel of God; Gal. iv. 14. ¶ *Sardis.*—In the Scriptures we find Sardis mentioned only by the revelator; i. 11; iii. 1, 4. It was an ancient city of Lydia, the capital of the monarch of the country. It was situated at the foot of Mt. Tmolus, on the river Pactolus, which run through the place. It was a city of great wealth, Cræsus the rich being one of the Lydian kings; and the influences which were exerted here were almost altogether unfavorable to the prosperity of Christianity. A miserable village called Sart is now found on the site of this once famous city. The seat of royalty, of wealth, of human greatness, we ought not to be surprised to learn that the gospel declined more rapidly here than in either of the seven churches. ¶ *Seven spirits of God.*—We have largely considered this form of expression under ch. i. 4, to which we refer. It is not designed to represent God as septiform; but the figure is drawn from the customs of ancient mon

the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that

archs, who kept seven confidential ministers or agents continually near their persons. ¶ *Seven stars.*—The Son of God held the seven stars in his right hand. See the notes on i. 16. This description is intended to show that it is the same glorious personage who addresses this church that had addressed John, as described in chap. i. He is scarcely described to either two of the churches under the same similitude; but yet the description is such to every one, that it is evident the same personage was intended in all the cases. ¶ *I know thy works.*—I know what thou hast done, and what thou art doing; I know fully thy character. ¶ *Livest and art dead.*—Thou hast the credit of having life, but thou art dead. This was a deeper abasement than was ascribed to either of the other of the seven churches. This church maintained the form of religion, and professed to adhere to Christ, but its spiritual life was nearly extinct. Life and death are used by the sacred writers metaphorically. There is no figure more common in the Scriptures. We meet with it in the account of the transgression of our first parents, and it is continued, with more or less frequency, through the entire Bible. “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;” 1 Tim. v. 6. See, also, John xi. 25, 26; 1 John iii. 14; Jude 12. The fact here stated is so generally known, that we need not make further references. The church in Sardis had a name to live, i. e., it professed to have spiritual life, and perhaps was regarded by the world as possessing it; but in the sight of Him who “knew what was in man,” there was little or no life in that church. It was dead. The church at Ephesus was charged by the revelator as having

are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard,

lost its first love. To this Paul seems to refer, when he says to the same church, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead;” Eph. vi. 14. This is the same figure; but the church at Ephesus was not so thoroughly paralyzed as that at Sardis.

2. *Strengthen the things which remain.*—As though he had said, “Your case is not utterly desperate. You may yet recover from your fallen state. Be watchful,—strengthen the things that remain, and those that are ready to die. I have not found thy works what they ought to have been in the sight of God; but thou mayest with diligence recover thy former estate.”

3. *How thou hast received and heard.*—That is, remember the manner in which thou hast received and heard the gospel; remember what advantages thou hast enjoyed; the effect which the preaching of the gospel had upon thee, when first thou didst hear it. ¶ *Hold fast.*—Hold fast that which remains. Let thy Christian character no further die. Hold fast to the profession of thy faith, and let thy works honor the name of Christ. ¶ *Repent.*—Repentance is put here for a change of habits, a reformation of life. Too many suppose that repentance is an act to be performed once for all, in a man’s life,—a change of views and feelings. But we are persuaded it signifies here a reformation of life,—a turning away from what had been condemned in the church in Sardis, and a change to newness of life. ¶ *As a thief.*—But if thou wilt not watch, I will come in judgment upon thee; thou shalt be recompensed according to thy works. The comparison, to come “as a thief,” was one which our Lord and his apostles fre-

and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief,

quently used to show the manner of his coming. This is the first time we have met with it in the Apocalypse. It is a very striking one, if we understand it with due limitations, and obtain the precise idea which the revelator intended to convey. The thief comes at night, when men are asleep, and are off their watch. He is more likely to come, too, at an hour when he is not expected. It was for these reasons that our Lord compared his own coming to that of a thief. "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh;" Matt. xxiv. 42—44. Paul uses the same comparison, 1 Thess. v. 2, 4; and Peter uses it, 2 Epis. iii. 10. It will appear still more striking, if we consider the state of the church at Sardis at this time. They were not watchful. They had fallen into a state like profound sleep, or spiritual death; they were exposed, therefore, to be taken unawares by the approaching judgment; or, as it is said in the verse, "Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." We see, by the figure before us, the utter folly of pushing the Scripture metaphors and comparisons too far. When we have ascertained the one object which the writer had in view in using the figure, that is sufficient. We are not to push the comparison to every point. Readers of the Bible, ay, and preachers too, sometimes carry out a comparison at all points. They think their duty is to get as much truth as possible out of the Bible. Hence, in the parables of the New Testament, they must find a meaning for everything, however

and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names

trivial. For instance, in interpreting the parable of the good Samaritan, (Luke x.,) which was designed merely to show that our benevolence should not be confined to our friends, our countrymen, or the professors of the same religion, the interpreters referred to must have a spiritual meaning for Jerusalem; for Jericho; for the thieves; for stripping the wounded man; for leaving him half dead; for the priest; for the Levite; for their passing by on the other side; for the oil, and wine, with which the Samaritan bathed the wounds; for the inn; and for the beast on which he bore the sufferer thereto. There can scarcely be anything more fatal to truth, than such a manner of interpreting the symbolical language of the Scriptures. In the case before us, the point to be illustrated was, that our Lord would come in an hour when he was not looked for, and when men were asleep. This was sufficient to justify the comparison, and to lead him to represent himself as being about to come like a thief in the night. But, if we push the application to all points, we could proceed to show that our Lord came to steal, to kill, and to destroy, (for this is the purpose for which thieves generally come,) than which nothing could be further from the truth. We see, then, that much discretion is to be used in the application of scriptural similitudes; and that there is more need of sound judgment to aid us in that matter, than of a vivid fancy.

4. *A few names.*—Names are put for persons. Nothing is more common in the Old Testament than the use of the word name for Jehovah, his person, his nature, his statutes. To praise, or call on the name of the Lord, was to praise, or call on God himself. To trust in the name of the Lord was to trust in Him. So, the

even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life,

heathen were said to call on the name of their gods. We read in Acts i. 15: "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty.) Here names again are put for persons. The word names, it is possible, may have been used, in the verse before us, in reference to the roll of the church, in the following sense: "Thou hast a few names enrolled, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments." ¶ *Even in Sardis.*—Here the city is referred to as a very wicked place; it seems to have been somewhat remarkable that even a few were found there. From all that is said of Sardis in the Apocalypse, we should conclude that of the seven Apocalyptic churches, this had fallen furthest from Christ. They had the reputation of living, but were dead, with the exception of the few names referred to; and these were certainly worthy of the greater praise for showing such an example of steadfastness in the midst of a general decline. ¶ *Walk with me in white.*—Garments are used to represent the conduct and character of men. Sin is sometimes expressed under the idea of nakedness; Rev. iii. 17; and sometimes under that of mean clothing; Job viii. 22; Rev. xvi. 15. But righteousness and purity are spoken of as clean, pure, beautiful garments. Men called on to leave their sins and turn to righteousness, are exhorted to put on their beautiful garments; Isa. lii. 1. So the saints are said to walk in *white*, the emblem of purity. "Let thy garments be always white;" Eccl. ix. 8. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow;" Isa. i. 18. The Ancient of Days had on garments white as snow; Dan. vii. 9. When Jesus was transfigured, his

raiment was white as the light; Matt. xvii. 2. The angels are supposed to be clothed in white; Matt. xxviii. 3; Acts i. 10. Thus the redeemed are said, in the verse before us, to walk with Christ in white, i. e., all pure. The same sense is expressed in the following verse.—See Dr. Campbell's note on John xvii. 11.

5. *Overcometh.*—This is another instance of the phraseology of John. Compare 1 John v. 4, 5, with Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21; xxi. 7. ¶ *White raiment.*—See the remarks under the preceding verse. White raiment was supposed by the Jews to be worn in the presence of God; and heralds from the invisible world are clothed in white raiment in the descriptions of the sacred writers. The four-and-twenty elders, that sat round about the throne, were clothed in white raiment, and had crowns of gold upon their heads; Rev. iv. 4. White raiment was a mark of purity, distinction, and honor. It was a sign of acceptance with God. Hence men were exhorted to obtain it; Rev. iii. 18. The wedding garment, mentioned Matt. xxii. 11, 12, was a long white robe; and garments of that kind, in many cases, especially at the weddings of the rich, were prepared and presented to the guests.—See Whittemore's *Illus. of Par.*, 289—291. ¶ *Out of the book of life.*—Here it is presumed that his name was in the book of life,—the promise is, that it shall be retained there. The greater part of the names attached to the church in Sardis were to be blotted out; but a few had the promise that their names should not be affected by this expurgating process. The names of God's servants are supposed metaphorically to be enrolled in a book. It was the custom of earthly kings to keep rolls of those they had under

but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let

their command. In cities, also, these rolls were kept; and those who had the honor of being admitted to freedom and citizenship were enrolled in the public register. If at any time they did that which was treasonable, then their names might be erased, and they were no longer confessed before the world, and before the sovereign, to be members of the city. From these customs, which were very ancient, came the scriptural phrase, book of life. God's chosen people and church are represented under the figure of a city. He is represented as keeping a roll of his friends, from which the names of the unfaithful would be erased. Moses' prayer was founded on this metaphor. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" Exod. xxxii. 31, 32; comp. Rom. ix. 3. The phrase "book of life" is peculiarly expressive. It signifies the roll of the living,—the roll of those who had been raised to the enjoyment of spiritual life; and, as the greater part of the church in Sardis had only a name to live, (i. e., their names were still kept on the roll,) while they were really dead, their names were to be erased from the book of life; while the names of those few who still enjoyed their spiritual life should be retained there. The phrase "book of life" may be found Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27; xxii. 19. ¶ *But I will confess his name.*—This is the counterpart of the blotting out. The unfaithful should have their names blotted out. On the contrary, the faithful should have their names retained; and in

him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

this way they should be confessed before the Father, and before his angels. Christ himself had previously expressed the same thing in similar words. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;" Matt. x. 32, 33. As if he had said, "If you be faithful, I will own you, as my disciples, before my Father and his angels,—I will acknowledge you in the most public manner; but if you fall into sin, or indifference,—if you, in this manner, deny me, then I shall disown you. Your name shall be erased from the roll of my followers; I shall not confess you, but deny you, as you have denied me." Such seems to be the import of the verse. While men will not be Christians, they certainly ought not to be acknowledged as such.

6. *He that hath an ear.*—See the remarks on Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29.

#### EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA.

7. *Philadelphia.*—The ancient city bearing this name was east of Sardis about 28 miles. It was in that section of Asia Minor called Lydia, and was named from Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos, by whom it was founded. It stood on a branch of Mount Tmolus, by the river Cogamus. Strabo relates, that in his time, which was not far from the date of the Apocalypse, this city had suffered much by frequent earthquakes. In 1312 it resisted the Turkish armies more successfully than the other cities of maritime Asia; but at length sunk under the common calamity. It is now a mean, but considerable town,

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth ;

and shutteth, and no man openeth :

S I know thy works ; behold, I have set before thee an open

called Ala-Shehr ; and contains from a thousand to fifteen hundred Greeks and Christians, who have a bishop and several inferior ecclesiastics.

¶ *He that is holy.* — The reference here is unquestionably to the Son of God. He was the Holy One, whom the Father anointed, and set apart, for the great work of human redemption. See Acts iii. 14 ; iv. 27, 30.

¶ *He that is true.* — This refers to the same personage. The phraseology is peculiarly that of the apostle John. See 1 Epis. v. 20 : "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true ; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." This is almost the precise language employed in the Apocalypse. Jesus called himself "the way, the truth, and the life ;" John xiv. 6 ; and one of John's favorite expressions in regard to him was, "He that is true." See also Rev. xix. 11.

¶ *Hath the key of David.* — There seems to be a reference here to Isaiah xxii. 22. "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder : so he shall open, and none shall shut ; and he shall shut, and none shall open." The key was a mark of office, either sacred or civil. It is certainly an agent of power. With the key to a dungeon, men may open it, and discharge all the inmates. With the key of a coffer, or casket, they may have access to all the treasures therein contained. If a man be invested with a key, therefore, it is a sign that great confidence is reposed in him, and great power is conferred upon him. He can open, and none can shut, — he can shut, and none can open. The key, therefore, has been used metaphorically, as a sign of confidence and power, from long

antiquity. The gods and goddesses of the heathen had their key-bearers. But it is peculiarly an appropriate metaphor when applied to the Lord Jesus. He accused those who prevented men from entering the kingdom of heaven, of taking away "the key of knowledge ;" Luke xi. 52. He had the key of knowledge, and hence he said to the people, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you ;" Matt. vii. 7. Isaiah prophesied of him, "That he should bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house ;" xlii. 7. And again, the same prophet says, speaking in the name of Jesus, "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ;" lxi. 1. Such being one of the principal offices for which the Redeemer came into the world, how appropriate is the metaphor of the key. The Saviour, then, probably intended that, like the individual mentioned in Isa. xxii. 22, he had a key which conferred on him the power to shut, and no man could open, — to open, and no man could shut. The lock was supposed to be one which no other key would fit, and which could not be opened by any other means. Such was the power of the key mentioned in the passage referred to ; and Jesus intended to say that he had the same power.

8. *I know thy works.* — This was said to all the churches. The meaning is, "I know what thou doest, and the motives by which thou art governed." Or, as it is said in another place, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings ;" Jer. xvii. 10. And so again, Rev. ii. 23, "I

door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

¶ *An open door.* — In the preceding verse it was said, that Jesus had the key of David; that he opened, and no man could shut; that he shut, and no man could open. After having asserted the possession of this power, he then said, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The meaning of this is, we think, "I will make thy way plain before thee; I will remove every obstacle; I, who alone can do this, will do it in thy behalf." To open a door in the metaphorical sense, is to give a man liberty to pursue his proper vocation without hindrance; to give free course to him in his pursuits. When God took away the obstacles which had prevented the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, it is said, "he had opened the door of faith" to them; Acts xiv. 27. So when Paul met with much success at Ephesus, and was induced thereby to prolong his stay there, he said, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries;" 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9. He had opportunity to preach the gospel; and notwithstanding the many adversaries, he met with much success. See, also, 2 Cor. ii. 12. When Paul prayed that a "door of utterance" might be opened to him, Col. iv. 3, he meant that he desired great liberty to preach the gospel. When, therefore, the Son of God promised to the Philadelphian church that he would set before them an open door, and no man could shut it, did it not mean, that he would give them full liberty in their proper Christian duties; that they should have free course and be glorified; and that their enemies should not

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I

have the power to throw any insurmountable obstacles in their way?

¶ *A little strength.* — Notwithstanding all this church had suffered, it had not been effectually crushed. It had some strength left. It had shown decisive signs of spiritual life, even in its worst condition, for it had been faithful,—more so, perhaps, than either of the other seven churches. ¶ *Hast kept my word.* — This is the proof of what we have said. They had held fast the gospel; they had not renounced the word of Christ. ¶ *Hast not denied my name.* — This is a further proof of their steadfastness. From all that is said, we are clearly of the opinion, that this church had shown a firmer devotion to Christ than any other of the seven.

9. *Synagogue of Satan.* — We have once before been called on to notice this phrase. See the notes on ii. 9. A synagogue of Satan signifies a wicked synagogue, a synagogue of adversaries, the synagogue being put for the worshippers therein. ¶ *Which say they are Jews.* — There were certain persons at Philadelphia who claimed to be pious Jews, and were outwardly very devout. But they were not truly the children of Abraham. They were Jews outwardly, or by descent; but were not Jews in the dignified and noble sense of the expression. John had learned this distinction from his master. During the ministry of Christ certain Jews boasted to him that they were Abraham's seed; but Jesus said in reply, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;" John viii. 39. He did not mean to deny that they were the posterity of Abraham; but they were not his children in character. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a

will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also

murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it;" Idem, 44. Possibly John had these facts in his mind when he wrote the passage in the Apocalypse which we are considering,— "Which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." ¶ *Worship before thy feet.*—I will make them do thee homage. They are now thine oppressors; they persecute thee; they cause thee to be cast into prison; thus proving, by their works, that they are not possessed of true religion, but are in fact the synagogue of Satan. They shall be humbled; and shall come and bow before thee. ¶ *Know that I have loved thee.*—They shall see so many proofs of the protection of Heaven extended out in thy behalf, that when I come in my glory, and they are cast down, they shall see that I have loved thee.

10. *The word of my patience.*—We think the meaning here is, the word in which I have enjoined the duty of patience, illustrated by my example. It was necessary for Christ and his apostles to enjoin the duty of patience on their fainting followers. Jesus said to them, in his memorable discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh;" Luke xxi. 17—20. The persecution would be so ardent, and the hope of escape from it at the coming of Christ would be so strong, that Jesus feared his disciples would become

will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly:

impatient. Paul said to the Thessalonians, that he gloried in them, "for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations;" 2 Epis. i. 4. And again, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ;" Idem, iii. 5. See also Jas. v. 7, 8. ¶ *Hour of temptation.*—This was to be the reward of their patience; and it was certainly a very natural one. They were to be preserved from the hour, or season, of temptation. Their severest trials, perhaps, had not then fallen upon them. But Jesus promised them help to bear them safely through. The troubles to which he referred were doubtless those that were to attend his coming. ¶ *All the world.*—The troubles were to come on all the world, to try them that dwelt on the earth. The word here (*oikoumene*) signified the inhabited world,—the Roman empire; to try them that dwelt in the earth, or land to which the judgment was confined. This was not a judgment in the immortal state; but here on the earth. It was a judgment simultaneous with the coming of Christ; and it was said it would "try them that dwelt upon the earth."

11. *Behold, I come quickly.*—This shows that the troubles mentioned in the preceding verse were the troubles attending the coming of the Lord Jesus. The invariable language which our Lord used concerning his coming showed that it was near when he was on the earth. It was still nearer when the Apocalypse was written. Again and again, we are told in that book, it was to transpire quickly. See i. 1, 3, and the notes on those passages. See also xxii. 6, 7, 10, 12, 20. How unwise do those

hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God,

appear who are still looking for the second coming of Christ. ¶ *Hold that fast.*—Be tenacious of thy good name, of thy patience, faith, and love. Part not from them. ¶ *Thy crown.*—These are thy crown,—thy virtues, thy regard for my word, thy love of my cause,—these things cover thee with glory and honor, and are a crown upon thy head. Hold fast, that no man take thy crown. See the notes on the phrase “crown of life,” ii. 10.

12. *Overcometh.*—We have before proved that this is in the style of John. See the notes on iii. 5, and other places. ¶ *A pillar in the temple of my God.*—This was the reward of the faithful,—not a far distant reward in the future world; but a reward in this world; he shall be a pillar in the temple of my God. To be a pillar is to be a support and an ornament, for a pillar supports and ornaments the building. We read that “the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth;” 1 Tim. iii. 15. That men are made pillars in the temple of God in the present life, who can deny? James, Cephas and John were said to be pillars; Gal. ii. 9. ¶ *He shall go no more out.*—For the pillar is a fixture, and cannot be taken away without great detriment to the building. ¶ *I will write upon him.*—That is, I will inscribe upon the pillar the name of the city of my God. And this city is the New Jerusalem. Not the old Jerusalem, the earthly city; but the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, the spiritual city, the city which John saw coming down from God out of

which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the

heaven; Rev. xxi. 2. When we come to consider chaps. xxi. and xxii., we shall have occasion to contemplate a very full description of the New Jerusalem, to which the revelator merely refers in the passage now before us. ¶ *My new name.*—This figure of the new name is borrowed from Isa. lxii. 2, and hath been before mentioned, Rev. ii. 17.

13. *He that hath an ear.*—See the remarks on Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17.

EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA.

14. *Laodiceans.*—This is the only place in which the Laodiceans, or their city, is mentioned in the Apocalypse; but we find mention made of them repeatedly in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians. He seemed to have an earnest regard for them, mingled with no small degree of anxiety. “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words;” Col. ii. 1—4. See also Col. iv. 13, 15, 16. Laodicea was situated on the confines of Phrygia and Lydia. Previous to assuming the name here given, it had borne other. It was long an inconsiderable place, but increased toward the time of Augustus Cæsar; and though an in-

church of the Laodiceans write ; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God ;

land town, it grew more potent than the cities on the coast, and became one of the largest towns in Phrygia, as its present ruins prove. It was terribly ravaged in the wars between the Turks and Romans, and afterwards by the Tartars. It was a place of consequence at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse. The Christians there were represented as being infected with pride, and also as having lost the love that they ought to bear to Christ. It is probable that the prosperity of their city, and the increase of its wealth, had lifted them up. The site is now utterly desolate. Not a trace of a house, church or mosque. ¶ *Angel of the church.*—See the notes on ii. 1, 8, 12, 18; iii. 1, 7. ¶ *The Amen.*—The word amen imports truth and certainty. Hence, the phrase, “verily, verily, I say unto you,” which we meet with so frequently in the gospels, (where the Greek for *verily* is Amen,) signifies, *truly*,—a solemn affirmation of the truth of the declaration. As a substantive, the word occurs with the article but once, “*the Amen*,” viz., in the verse before us. We suspect that in some Greek copies it is also preserved in Rev. i. 18, as Schmidt, in his Greek Concordance, gives the article as being found in that place. The amen signifies, the true, the certain. See Spear’s Titles of Christ, under that word. ¶ *The faithful and true.*—This is the exact sense of *the amen*, and follows in apposition. The amen, i. e., the faithful and true. ¶ *Witness.*—Jesus was preëminently a witness, and so he often described himself. The evangelist John called the Baptist a witness; John i. 8, 15, 32, 34. Jesus is described himself as a witness; John iii. 11, 44; iv. 44; v. 31, 32, 33, 36, 37; vii. 7; viii. 13, 14, 18; x. 25; xiii. 21; xv. 26, 27; xviii. 23, 37. This is abundantly sufficient to show the style of John. He speaks of Christ very fre-

quently as a witness, and his preaching is represented as the bearing of testimony, or bearing record. This is to be reckoned among the instances which show a similarity between the style of the Apocalypse and that of the undisputed writings of John. ¶ *Beginning of the creation of God.*—We have already learned that Jesus was the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end;” i. 8. He is now called “the beginning of the creation of God.” Does this mean that Jesus was the beginning in the order of time? or the head, or chief, of all God’s works in point of honor and degree? The phrase “beginning of the creation,” is used adverbially for the time of the commencement of the works of creation. “But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female;” Mark x. 6; xiii. 19. The apostle John seems to have had the idea that Jesus existed before all created things, and was the agent of the Father in the creation, and acted for him; and hence was the chief, or prince of the creation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;” John i. 1—3. Here is a manifest reference to the beginning of the creation; for it was of the creation that John was speaking. Jesus was the chief, or the head of this creation. “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;” 3. Look now at the first Epistle of John. Here we have the same train of thought; and, as in the gospel, it breaks out at the very opening. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life.”

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then, because thou art

lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth :

17 Because thou sayest, I am

In the Gospel, Jesus is called "the word;" in the Epistle he is called "the word of life;" in the Apocalypse "the word of God;" xix. 13. Jesus was the head of the creation. Paul expresses the same idea "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist;" Col. i. 15—17. There are evidently two senses in which Jesus is the "beginning of the creation of God." 1st. He was the first-born of every creature; Col. i. 15. 2d. He was the prince or chief of the creation. Both ideas seem to have been combined in the character of Jesus, in the mind of John, and also of Paul. John preserved the trait in his three works, viz., the Apocalypse, the Epistle, and the Gospel.

15. *I know thy works.*—This was said to all the seven churches. ¶ *Neither cold nor hot.*—They had not forsaken Christ, neither were they very warm in his defence. Their state seems to have caused a perplexity in the mind of the Son of God. If they had been either cold or hot, he would have known more directly what judgment to have pronounced; and hence he says, "I would thou wert cold or hot." I would there were something more decisive in thy case. The state of the church at Laodicea seems to have been somewhat analogous to that of the children of Israel in the time of the prophet Elijah. They seemed to have become bewildered by the influence of idolatry, as practised by Ahab and his powerful but iniquitous spouse, Jezebel. Elijah,

in the strong consciousness of the rectitude of his cause, called aloud unto them to decide between God and Baal. "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word;" 1 Kings xviii. 21. Their state of uncertainty was peculiarly puzzling and disagreeable to the prophet of the true God. So in the case before us, the Son of God says, "I would thou wert cold or hot."

16. *Spue thee out of my mouth.*—The figure is expressive, as any man's sensibilities will testify. Because they were lukewarm, i. e., neither cold nor hot, the Son of God could not endure them. We see, then, the standard of love which Christ required. He asked for a *fervent* love. If any man loved father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, houses, lands, or his own life even, more than Christ, he was not fit, in that age, to be his disciple. When the church at Ephesus lost their first love, they were regarded as a fallen people, and were called on, as such, to repent. They probably did repent. The church at Laodicea had committed the same sin—they had left their first love; they had become lukewarm. Such a state the Lord Jesus could not endure. He showed signs of displeasure. When a people of old were driven from their land in consequence of their wickedness, the land was said to spue them out; Lev. xviii. 28; and so when the Laodiceans were driven from the special presence of the Son of man, in consequence of their indifference, he was said to spue them out of his mouth.

17. *I am rich.*—People oftentimes glory in their earthly riches. This was the case with Ephraim of old; and perhaps the revelator had his eye

rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretch-

ed, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of

on that case. "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin;" Hosea xii. 8. That this was an instance of pride and self-confidence, is evident from the 14th verse. "Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him." The Laodiceans had increased, it may have been, in earthly goods. Their city had prospered. They thought more of this than they ought to have done; they placed their trust in it, and gloried in it. They had forgotten the excellent advice of the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;" Jer. ix. 23, 24. ¶ *Thou art wretched.*—The revelator embraced the opportunity to impress upon them a sense of their spiritual poverty. In the more important sense, they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. The sacred writers often warn men against "the deceitfulness of riches." We are told in the parable that it "chokes the word;" Matt. xiii. 22. The Lord Jesus said, "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God;" Mark x. 24. The deceitfulness of riches consists in this,—they often lead men to suppose that they can furnish the soul all that it desires. "I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my

soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" Luke xii. 18, 19. When men are rich, they too frequently think they "have need of nothing;" while in the spiritual and more important sense, they are very poor. "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition;" 1 Tim. vi. 9. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;" 17—19. The terms wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, are often used in the Scriptures to signify spiritual poverty.

18. *I counsel thee.*—"I will give thee advice that thy true condition requires—hear what I say unto thee." ¶ *Buy of me.*—"Buy," is often used in the sense of obtain. "Buy the truth and sell it not;" Prov. xxiii. 23. "He that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness;" Isaiah lv. 1, 2. This was the only sense in which Jesus ever sold anything. He never received money for what he communicated to men. ¶ *Gold tried in the fire.*—The precious metals are used in different senses in the word of God. They are often put for

me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be

clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-

earthly riches. But in their purest state, they are sometimes used to represent "durable riches and righteousness." And so the process of the purification of the metals is used to represent the process of divine grace in the purification of the sinful ; and afflictions and chastisements, because they purify, are compared to the fire of the furnace. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried : they shall call on my name, and I will hear them ; I will say, It is my people ; and they shall say, The Lord is my God ;" Zech. xiii. 9. "But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness ;" Mal. iii. 2, 3. Hence, gold as the purest metal, and especially in its highest state of purification, is put for truth and purity. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver ;" Prov. xxv. 11. "How is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed ! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter !" Lam. iv. 1, 2. Buy of me gold, tried in the fire, i. e., the purest gold ; that which has no alloy. It is certainly put here for truth and righteousness, — the virtues which that church greatly needed. They had supposed themselves rich ; they had gold and silver ; but they needed a better kind of riches, which the revelator represents by "gold

tried in the fire." ¶ *White raiment.* — We have already explained this metaphor, in the notes on iii. 5. White was the color that denoted honor, purity and rejoicing. The inhabitants of the heavenly world, the attendants who stand around the throne of God, messengers who bear the will of God to men, are all supposed to be clad in white. The heavenly messenger who appeared to Daniel, was in white ; vii. 9. At the transfiguration, the raiment of Jesus was "white as the light ;" Matt. xvii. 2. The angel who appeared at the resurrection of Jesus, had on raiment "white as snow ;" Idem, xxviii. 3 ; see also Rev. iv. 4 ; vii. 9, 13 ; xv. 6 ; xix. 8, 14. From these facts, the redeemed, cleansed from all their sins, are said to be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ;" Eph. v. 27 ; that is, they are wholly white. "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried ;" Dan. xii. 10. And this whiteness, or purification, is produced by the virtue of Christ's word ; for it was said of those who had been redeemed, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ;" Rev. vii. 14. When, therefore, the Laodiceans were counselled to buy white raiment, it was in effect urging them to be purified ; and as their spiritual destitution had been described, among other metaphors, by a want of clothing, the purity they so much needed was beautifully represented by raiment of whiteness. ¶ *Eye-salve.* — The Laodiceans had been said to be blind, as well as poor and naked ; the correspondence of the metaphor required, therefore, that the improvement of their spiritual condition should be described as the improvement of the sight. Eye-salve is to promote the health of the eye ; and they were

salve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the

door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with

to apply it that they might see. But it is easily perceived that the triplicate of metaphors in this verse are all aimed at the same thing, viz., to convince the church addressed, they were truly in a destitute condition in spiritual things, whatever they might think of themselves; and that Jesus, if they would but listen to his voice, would lead them to such an improvement as they needed.

19. *As many as I love.*—The Son of God was specially careful that they should not think he loved them not, because he rebuked and chastened them. He therefore stated, that he rebuked and chastened those whom he loved. This is the principle of the divine administration. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" Heb. xii. 5, 6. ¶ *Be zealous therefore, and repent.*—Their sin had been that of lukewarmness. They were called on to be zealous. Zeal is the counterpart of coldness. Paul said, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing;" Gal. iv. 18. The Christian's duty was a good thing; and the Laodiceans therefore were urged to enter into it with zeal, or heartfelt earnestness. They were called on to change their lives specially in regard to this matter of lukewarmness.

20. *I stand at the door and knock.*—This is a figure of our Lord that occurs in the gospels; see Luke xii. 36. It implies, that Jesus was interceding, by his word, for admission to their souls. ¶ *I will come in to him,*

*and will sup with him, and he with me.*—When a man receives the truth, Jesus is said to take up his abode with him. So we read, in John xiv. 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The same in substance is found in John's 1st Epistle: "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father;" ii. 24. In the same sense God is said to dwell with men upon the earth, viz., by the power of his truth.

21. *Sit with me in my throne.*—Some think this refers to distinguished honors to be conferred upon the saints, or believers, in the immortal world. But wherein does it differ from the rewards offered to those of the other six churches who were faithful? Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 26; iii. 5, 12;—all the figures in these passages refer to the same class of honors. To sit *with Christ on his throne*, is to reign with him. And where does he reign? Where is his kingdom? Is it not among men? Let it be observed that Jesus promised to his disciples that they should be exalted to thrones when his kingdom was fully set up, provided they followed him in the regeneration and suffered with him. "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" Matt. xix. 28. Jesus was a spiritual king, and, of

my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

course, reigned in a spiritual kingdom. And according to Paul's application of a passage in Isaiah, this was a matter of prophecy. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;" Isa. xi. 1—4. For Paul's application of this passage to Christ, see Rom. xv. 12. The wicked will not have Christ to reign over them. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me;" Luke xix. 27. Jesus will continue to reign until all enemies are put under his feet; 1 Cor. xv. 25. And how does he reign? We have already said, spiritually. He reigns by the power of his truth and of his life. His faithfulness, his resignation, his piety, benevolence, love, have a great influence over all his followers. In this sense, all faithful Christians, whose lives are an imitation of his, reign with him, in the proclaiming and illustrating of his truth and in the influence of their lives. But this they cannot do, unless they are faithful. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us;" 2 Tim. ii. 12. This reigning with Christ exists in any

## CHAPTER IV.

**A**FTER this I looked, and behold, a door was opened

place where Christians are faithful. We are not obliged to confine it to the immortal world. It is expressly declared to be on the earth. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall REIGN ON THE EARTH;" Rev. v. 9, 10. See also the notes on Rev. ii. 26, 27.

22. *He that hath an ear.*—See the remarks on ii. 7, 11, 17, &c.

## CHAPTER IV.

1. *After this I looked.*—After the things which had been described, I looked, &c. &c. We now enter on an entirely new section of the Apocalypse. The revelator had stated, in the commencement, the authority by which he spake; and had described the actual state of the seven Asiatic churches, which perhaps were put forth as representatives of all the churches. Having finished so much, he proceeded to the prophetic parts of his communication. And let it be observed, the *prophetic* part of the Apocalypse begins with the verse now before us. The manner in which he had been prepared to make the communication to the seven churches, was described i. 10; and what he saw, he was instructed to write and communicate to those churches, ver. 11. A distinct epistle was written to each church. He had spoken by the Spirit, or rather the Spirit had spoken by him; and at the end of each epistle, he had called on men as follows: "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And here it strikes the mind, that the language is not what the Spirit saith to the *seven* churches, but what the Spirit saith to

in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were

the churches, as if meaning the churches at large. The presumption is, that although John addressed only the seven, yet being put as representatives of all the rest, they were all interested in the communications which he made. After he had concluded his communications to the seven churches, he came to the prophetic parts, which seem not to be addressed to those churches, but to the Christian world at large. Nothing more is said in the Apocalypse about the seven churches. The testimony is "to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book;" xxii. 18. ¶ *I looked.*—The word here is not to be taken in the ordinary acceptation of merely seeing; but is to be understood as having an insight, after the manner of the prophets, or seers, by which he was enabled to foretell the events which he subsequently described. ¶ *Door was opened in heaven.*—We take the opportunity, in this place, to offer a few remarks on the scriptural, and especially the apocalyptic, sense, of the word heaven. It is put, 1st. For the region of the air, as when we speak of the fowls of heaven; Rev. viii. 13, x. 6; xiii. 13; xiv. 6; xvi. 21; xix. 17; xx. 9. 2d. It is put for the firmament, as when we speak of the sun in heaven, or the stars of heaven; vi. 14; viii. 10; ix. 1; xx. 11. 3d. It is put for the imaginary dwelling-place of God. The firmament is but an imaginary place; and in the same sense heaven may be understood when spoken of as God's dwelling-place. The form of God's existence is altogether mysterious. We do not suppose we are to understand heaven, when spoken of as the dwelling-place of God, to be strictly a locality. It partakes of the metaphorical, the scenical. God, among the ancients, was supposed to dwell in any place where he specially manifested his presence. When Jacob

of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither,

slept upon the ground, on his way towards Haran, he had a vision, and behold, a ladder was seen reaching from the earth to the heaven, on which the angels of God were ascending and descending; and he heard a voice above it saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father," &c. He awoke, with the spell of the dream upon him. "Surely (said he) the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven;" Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. As though he had said, this is the avenue to God's presence. The Jews of old supposed that God inhabited some spiritual dwelling, (if we may so speak,) which they called *eternity*, a high and holy place. They also supposed him to dwell in the humble and contrite spirit; Isaiah lvii. 15. This high and holy place, of which the Jews had an indistinct idea, they called *heaven*. But they held, from the earliest times, that God also dwelt among *them*. He dwelt beneath the cherubim, at the mercy-seat, upon the ark of the covenant; 2 Kings xix. 15; Psal. lxxx. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16. In the case before us, it would seem that heaven was put for the supposed dwelling-place of God. This was represented to the Jews, in the temple, by the mercy-seat. By the door opening in heaven, may be understood the opening of the door, or gate, to the mercy-seat. ¶ *A trumpet talking with me.*—This was the first voice the revelator heard. He had seen no person, but he heard a voice, which seemed to be as if a trumpet had life, and had the power to talk. The meaning is, it was a trumpet-like voice. In the view of the ancient Hebrews, men could not see God with the outward eye. They could see a representation of him; but it was not supposed they could see God himself; John i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 16. There was a moral or spiritual sense,

and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat

on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight

in which the pure in heart could see him; Matt. v. 8. But though they could not see Jehovah, yet they could hear his voice, as was the case with Adam and Eve in the garden; Gen. iii. 8. So the revelator heard the voice of the trumpet talking with him. We desire to remark once for all, that we regard the scenes described in this chapter to be purely metaphorical, as much so as the account of the temptation of our first parents, in the garden of Eden, by the serpent. He who should seek to interpret the language literally, would have confusion worse confounded. The design of the revelator seems to have been to represent, that he had a special opportunity of approaching the Holy One, and of learning from him the events "which must be hereafter." The imagery is not real, but imaginative. It is a figurative description of the dwelling-place of the High and Holy One. See 2d, 3d, and 4th verses. ¶ *Which must be hereafter.*—This shows plainly that the prophetic part of the book is about to begin, for which the revelator was specially prepared by the communication with heaven. We were informed in Rev. i. 19, that John was directed to write the things which he had seen, the things which were, and the things which were to be afterward. The latter things are written in those parts of the Apocalypse which we have now approached.

2. *Immediately I was in the Spirit.*—That is, "when the door was opened, and the trumpet voice talked with me, I was immediately in a spiritual frame of mind"—a fit and proper state in which to behold the things which he was to see and describe.

¶ *A throne was set in heaven.*—This was the first thing he saw after the

door in heaven was opened. ¶ *And one sat on the throne.*—He saw not the being, and yet the sight impressed him with the fact that there was a being there.

3. *Like a jasper and sardine stone.*—Beautiful, glorious! Such was the appearance. These precious stones had great lustre. But this was not all that contributed to the brilliance of the scene. ¶ *A rainbow round about the throne.*—The description is intended to be of the most gorgeous kind. This description of the throne of God, and of the mysterious Being seated thereon, seems to us to be framed according to the descriptions given by Isaiah and Ezekiel. See the words of the former prophet: "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke;" Isa. vi. 1—4. This vision appeared to the prophet to be in the temple; for he said that the train of the Holy One "filled the temple." See also Ezekiel chap. i., especially verses 26—28. "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward. and from the

like unto an emerald.

#### 4 And round about the throne

appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." Now we cannot have a doubt that the revelator found his images in the passages we have here quoted. They were not the creations of wild fancy in him; he found them in the sacred books of the Jews. Compare with the above Ezek. x.

4. *Four-and-twenty seats.* — This is a continuation of the imagery. Four-and-twenty exalted seats, or thrones, are placed around the throne of God. We say thrones, for those who sit on them have crowns upon their heads, as signs that they reign with God. ¶ *Four-and-twenty elders.* — First of all, who were the *elders*? What kind of an officer were they? The word itself signifies, a man of age, experience, and dignity. We read of the elders often in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. They were the magistrates, heads, or rulers of the people. Even when the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, they seem to have had a kind of government, and there were among them some whom they owned as their teachers and rulers. Moses was directed to confer with them, previously to undertaking the deliverance of the people; Exod. iii. 16—18. These elders were men of experience, wisdom and gravity, and of authority among the people. Afterwards, when it became necessary for Moses to have assistance in governing the people, he was advised to appoint elders for that purpose. "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating

were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four

covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee;" Exod. xviii. 21, 22. For the commission given to these men, see Deut. i. 16, 17. This appointment was confirmed by the authority of God; see Numb. xi. 16, 17; and these men ruled in conjunction with Moses; Deut. xxvii. 1: "And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day." With this explanation we shall be able to understand the matter of the four-and-twenty elders in the passage before us. The form of the court of heaven was made with reference to the God-appointed form of government among the Jews. This form was held sacred in the eyes of the Jews; and how natural was it therefore for the revelator, himself a Hebrew, when painting a scene of the presence of God, and the heavenly court, to describe it after the sacred fashion of the Jews. It is true, we read, in one or two instances, of some slight changes in the government; but a body of elders was always clustered around the chief officer, both in secular and holy matters. We read often of the elders in the New Testament as being the leaders of the Jewish people in their opposition to Jesus and his apostles, as well as other matters. This led the Christians to regard the elders as stiff-necked and rebellious men; but it begat no prejudices in their minds in regard to the office itself. But why was the number *twenty-four* selected? We read nowhere of that exact number of elders except in the Apoca-

and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they

lypse. There probably existed some reason in the revelator's mind why he selected the number twenty-four. There are two reasons which may be assigned; and they present themselves to our mind with a force so nearly equal, that it is difficult to state which has the most power. We will proceed to name them. 1st. There were twelve apostles in the Christian church. The Jewish and Christian religion were both divinely appointed institutions; and it is possible, therefore, that the revelator desired to represent them both, by their elders, in the court of heaven. One elder for each of the twelve tribes, and one to answer to each of the twelve apostles, (who were regarded as the heads of the tribes of spiritual Israel, Matt. xix. 28,) would make up the number twenty-four. With this view, the court of heaven is composed, under the Father, of an equal number of representatives from both the Jewish and Christian institutions. The twelve Jewish tribes are sometimes used spiritually for the Jews converted to the Christian religion. See James i. 1, and Rev. vii. The other reason to which we have referred, which perhaps induced the revelator to use the number twenty-four, is this: Under the reign of David the Jewish priests were divided into twenty-four orders, courses, or classes, as will be perceived by examining Numb. xxiv. The Christian believers, those who had entered Christ's spiritual kingdom, who had come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, were reckoned as kings and priests in God's sight. "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices;" 1 Pet. ii. 5. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;" 9. The Christians confessed that they had been made "kings and priests unto God;" Rev. . 6; v. 10. "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign

with him a thousand years;" xx. 6. By analogy, then, the Christian priests might be divided into twenty-four courses; and each course having one representative in the court of heaven, would make the twenty-four elders. Whether one of these reasons, or both of them, operated on the mind of the revelator; and if only one, which of the two, we must leave for the reader to determine. These elders perform no offices in the drama of the Apocalypse which are inconsistent with their characters as representatives of the church, or of the holy men of both Jewish and Christian dispensations. They are principally distinguished by the devout and solemn worship which they rendered to God and the Lamb; Rev. v. 8; xi. 16; xix. 4. ¶ *Clothed in white raiment.*—We have already shown that inhabitants of the heavenly world are supposed to be clothed in white, as a sign of purity and of honor. See the notes on Rev. iii. 4, 5, 18. The redeemed were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; i. 5; vii. 14. How appropriate it was, then, for the revelator to clothe his elders in white. ¶ *Crowns of gold.*—The Christians were kings as well as priests; and hence the elders were represented each as having a crown of gold upon his head, which he wore in the presence of the Highest, who thus acknowledged the preëminence. The four-and-twenty seats on which they sat were (*thronoi*) thrones; and we know of no reason why the word was not thus rendered, as in Matt. xix. 28. A brief review of what has been said on the subject before us, may present it now to the reader's mind in a more definite, clear and single light. In his figurative description, John first puts a throne, with a glorious personage upon it, bright and beautiful to behold. Round about the throne was a rainbow. It was encircled also with four-and-twenty minor thrones, on

had on their heads crowns of gold.

which sat as many elders, clothed in white, having on their heads crowns of gold. No one can suppose this description to be a reality; it is purely imaginative. We think the words of Dr. Doddridge are worthy of great attention: — “We are not to imagine that the person sitting on the throne, or the four animals, or the four-and-twenty elders, were real beings existing in nature; though they represented in a figurative manner things that did really exist. — And though it is possible that aerial scenes might, by divine or angelic power, have been formed, I think it much more probable that all that passed was purely in the *imagination* of St. John. This will keep us, in our interpretation, clear of a thousand difficulties, not to say absurdities, which would follow from a contrary supposition: namely, that there is in heaven an animal in the form of a *lamb* to represent Christ; and that there are such living creatures as are here described, and that God himself appears in a human form, &c. *And this observation I make once for all*, desiring it may be remembered, and applied as occasions present.” — (See his *Expos. on the place.*) Such was Doddridge’s opinion, and we have no doubt of its correctness. The great truths of prophecy made known to John were doubtless divine communications to him; but the imagery is to be understood as imagery merely. We have already shown what suggested these metaphors to the mind of the revelator. He, doubtless, obtained them from the Old Testament. It is a common metaphor of the Old Testament writers to represent God as sitting on a throne, all glorious in appearance. The scene of John’s vision, says Lightfoot, “is according to the scheme of the temple, and the divine glory there. And hence you have mention of the altar, candle-

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunder-

sticks, sea of glass, the ark of the covenant, and the like. And as at the opening of the temple doors, a trumpet sounded, — so is the allusion here. The door in heaven opened, and a trumpet calls John to come in and see what was there. — (Harmony of the New Testament.) The same author says again, — “The revelator seeth Christ enthroned in the middle of his church, in the same prophetic and visionary emblem that Ezekiel had seen; Ezek. i. and x.; and this is a commentary and fulfilling of that scene that Daniel speaketh of; vii. 9, 10, 22. In Ezekiel the Lord, when Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and the glory of the Lord that used to be there, and the people, were to flit into another land, — appeareth so enthroned as sitting in judgment and flitting away by degrees to another place, as compare Ezek. i. and x. well together. So Christ here, when the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand, and his glory and presence [were about] to remove from that nation, now given up to unbelief and obduration, to reside among the Gentiles, — he is seated upon his throne, as judge and king, with glorious attendance, to judge that nation for their sins and unbelief, and stating the affair of his church, whither his glory was now removing.” — (Harmony of the New Testament.) We explain the figures in this chapter on the same principle on which we explain similar imagery in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew. The appearance of God’s dwelling-place is drawn from that of the camp of Israel. 1. The tabernacle was in the middle there; so is the throne here. 2. There, the four squadrons of the camp of Levi next the tabernacle; so here, the four living creatures. 3. There, the whole camp of Israel; so here, twenty-four elders, representatives of the whole church, built from

ings, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which

twelve tribes and twelve apostles; or reference may be made to the twenty-four courses of priests.

5. *And out of the throne.*—This description is given to correspond with the ancient notions of the Jews in regard to the signs that attended the presence of Jehovah. The scene is drawn as if there were some powerful being present, invisible to the outward eye, but who made his presence known by the lightnings, thunders and voices. Whether there was anything in the temple service answering to this, we would not say with certainty; we feel more confidence that the revelator drew the metaphor from the account given by Moses of the presence of God upon the mount. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice;" *Exod. xix. 16—19.* This shows that the ancient Jews did not describe God as a being they could see; but his presence was denoted in the manner here pointed out. ¶ *Seven lamps of fire.*—These answered to the golden candlestick with seven lamps, which was before the most holy place in the tabernacle. The seven lamps of fire (i. e. lighted or burning lamps) are said to be the seven spirits of

are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto

God; that is, they represented the seven spirits of God. This description is taken from *Ezek. i. 13.* "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning." We have shown under former passages what is meant by the seven spirits of God. Earthly monarchs, who maintained the most magnificence, had seven spirits, or confidential ministers, dwelling near their persons. They were the means of access which the subjects had, in the most of cases, with their sovereign. They, therefore, were called his spirits; and because they were watchful to see all that was done and report to their master, they were sometimes represented, as in *Rev. v. 6*, by seven eyes going out into all the earth, meaning thereby, far-seeing eyes. See *Ezra vii. 4*; *Esther i. 10, 14*; *Jer. iii. 25*; *1 Esdras viii. 11*; *Tobit xii. 15.* See particularly our notes on *Rev. i. 4* and *iii. 1.* The seven spirits of God were represented by seven lamps, as the seven stars (like lamps) represented the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks represented the seven churches themselves; *Rev. i. 20.* Having described the throne and Him that sat on it, so far as appearances were made to mortal eyes, and also the court of heaven, the revelator proceeds, in the next place, to show what was in front of the throne.

6. *A sea of glass like unto crystal.*—This was before the throne. Observe, it is not a sea of water, but a sea of glass, clear, beautiful, like unto crystal. It was a plain, level, beautiful surface,—not liquid, but called a sea, because it was so

crystal: and in the midst of the

throne, and round about the

transparent, that the figures of persons were reflected from it as if it were water. The floor, or pavement before the tabernacle, on which the people stood to worship God, was composed of plates or slabs, highly polished. It looked like glass, and when persons stood upon it, their images were so clearly reflected, that they seemed almost to be standing on the open sea. Hence, we read, Rev. xv. 2, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." They stand on the sea of glass, — for so the pavement seemed to be; and they had the harps of God, because they came there to praise him; it was the place on which the people stood when they assembled to sing in chorus the sacred songs of the temple. ¶ *In the midst of the throne.* — The beings referred to had a very near approach to the throne; they were nearer to it than were the four-and-twenty elders. The cherubim seemed to be in the midst of the ark. "For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above;" 1 Kings viii. 7; 2 Chron. v. 8; Heb. ix. 5. From this near relation which the cherubim held to the throne, came the idea of the revelator. ¶ *Four beasts, or rather four living creatures.* — The four beasts were hieroglyphical representations, though the word *beasts* seems to be an unfortunate translation; for they certainly are described as intelligent beings, "saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "It was a most unhappy mistake in our translators, (says Dr. Doddridge,) to render the word *zoa*, beasts; it certainly signifies any other kind of animals, that is, of creatures which

have animal life, as well as beasts. The word *beast* not only degrades the signification, but the animals here mentioned have parts and appearances which beasts have not, and are represented as in the highest sense rational." The revelator seems to have copied from Ezekiel in this description. To describe the approach of Jehovah, the prophet said, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God;" chap. i. 1. "And I looked, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces; and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward; whither the Spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down

throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning;" 4—14. On this long description we shall offer a few remarks. The Egyptians, from the earliest antiquity, were in the habit of writing, especially on sacred subjects, in hieroglyphics. In truth, *sacred writing* is what the word signifies etymologically. The people of Egypt had exercised a great influence over the Jews, especially in consequence of the long bondage which they had suffered there. It was there, perhaps, that the latter improved in the art of this kind of writing—expressing ideas by images. In the passage just quoted from Ezekiel, we have a sample of the hieroglyphical style. And at what did the prophet aim? Answer: To give a description of the unseen Deity. He had said, (ver. 1,) "I saw visions of God;" i. e., emblems and symbols of the divine majesty. His object was to describe, by emblems, the attributes of God. The Jews never professed to see God. He was, in their estimation, a spiritual being; but still he was actually a being, possessing all the attributes of the most perfect intelligence. In the prophet's attempt to give a hieroglyphical representation, he sought for the most wonderful powers possessed by any creatures; and these powers he represents by the images of the creatures themselves, as is always done in hieroglyphics. Some of these powers he found in one kind of a creature, and some in another; and in bringing them together, they form an anomalous animal, such as never existed, and probably never will exist. When we are studying hieroglyphics, therefore, we are not to think so much of the outward appearance of the symbol, be it ever so anomalous, as of the qualities intended to be represented by it. The

idea which men have of an angel is that of a being of extraordinary intelligence, having the power of passing from world to world, especially from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven. How, then, is the angel described hieroglyphically? Answer: As a being that we have never seen—a human being with wings. So in the description of Ezekiel, his aim being to describe powers all of which were not found in the same creature, he was obliged to conjoin different creatures; and in this way he produced his anomalous animals. But it is not to the form of the animals we are to look, but to the qualities which he represented by them; and these qualities were such as he supposed God to possess. In the first place he described the approach of the Deity. He came in a whirlwind [a sign of great power]; he rode on a brilliant cloud, in the centre of which was a flame, whose effulgence shined out like amber. Out of this cloud came the likeness of four creatures, to represent the powers or attributes of God. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. Pre-eminently, then, the prophet desired to give the idea of *intelligence*. Every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. There never was in reality such a creature; but let us see what it represented. By four faces they saw in every direction, showing the simultaneous vision which God has of all parts of the universe. Man, the noblest of all God's lower works, can see but one way at a time; but God can see all things, and in all directions, at a glance. So much for the four faces. By their wings they could fly,—they could pass from place to place through the air. Their feet were straight; they went every one straight forward; ver. 12. They were brilliant, sparkled like burnished brass, like the feet of the Son of man, mentioned Rev. i. 15. They had the

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

hands of man; and hence all the skill denoted by the human hand was attributed to God. This is the highest degree of skill possessed by any creature; had there been greater, the prophet would have chosen it. Their wings were joined; and thus, although they had the powers of different beings, yet there was a sense in which they were one. All the powers of the four were designed to represent the powers of the Being who called himself One Lord. They turned not when they went; for as each had four faces, there was no need that they should do so. Man, the most perfect being on earth, sees but one way at the same time. He must therefore turn his body when he wishes to change his direction. To take away what would be an imperfection in the Deity, the prophet gives his images each four faces; and hence they turned not when they went, but went every one straight forward. And now as to the likeness of their faces. Each one had the face of a man, — INTELLIGENCE; the face of a lion, the king of beasts, — MAJESTY, STRENGTH; the face of an ox, — [a sacred animal which the Egyptians worshipped; hence the golden calf of the children of Israel,] denoting STRENGTH, PATIENCE, FAITHFUL LABOR; the face of an eagle, — SOARING, PIERCING. The eagle soars to the highest height, and he has the most piercing sight. Now let any man, even of the most brilliant fancy, put himself into the age in which Ezekiel lived, and see if he can devise an image which will describe more fully and correctly the attributes of the Deity. The whole of the tenth chapter of Ezekiel is on the same subject. Both chapters contain the prophet's description of

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy,

what he called "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord;" i. 28. ¶ *Full of eyes.* — See Ezek. i. 18; x. 12. It is evident the revelator had Ezekiel's description in his mind. The revelator's words are, "full of eyes before and behind," i. e., on every side. They had faces every way, and, of course, they had eyes every way. The eye is the metaphor for sight and intelligence; and the idea is, that God can see and understand all things at a glance.

7. *Like a lion.* — This is evidently a copy from Ezekiel's hieroglyphics; i. 10. ¶ *Like a calf.* — Ezekiel said, ox; they are of the same species. ¶ *Face as a man.* — This also comes from Ezekiel. ¶ *Flying eagle.* — No one, we should think, could doubt that the revelator followed the prophet. He was not writing the effusions of a sickly brain, but copying from the standard sacred books of the Jews; and when the intent of these metaphors is seen, and their force and power understood, they are known to convey ideas of the greatest grandeur concerning the Deity.

8. *Six wings.* — Ezekiel's images had wings. ¶ *Full of eyes.* — We have already noticed this under ver. 6. ¶ *Rest not day or night,* i. e., cease not from their glorious employment; abate not from the expression of their reverence. This distinction is very necessary to be observed, because it is said of the worshippers of the horrible Roman beast, that they "have no rest day nor night;" xiv. 11. But the words in the case before us have no such sense as the words bear in the latter quotation. ¶ *Holy, holy, holy.* — Thrice holy art thou, O Lord God Almighty. This is the most solemn form of ascription in all the Bible. Isaiah has a figure very like Eze

holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory, and honor, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty el-

kiel's, and the two appear to have been mingled in the revelator's mind. "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory;" Isaiah vi. 2, 3. ¶ *Was, and is, and is to come.*—An assertion of the eternal being of God, covering wholly the past, the present, and the future.

9. *Those beasts give glory.*—They are, in the description of the revelator, not only images to represent God's attributes, but they are also agents to execute his will; and thence they worship him. They were next to the throne of God; and not only represent his attributes to us, but also, as the agents of his will, are invested with those attributes, that they may be his ministers the more effectually. Standing next the throne, they set the example of adoration,—an example which at once infuses itself throughout the heavenly hosts.

10. *Four and twenty elders fall down.*—They imitated the four living creatures in their adoration before the throne. All heaven worships God; all earth should worship Him. ¶ *That liveth for ever and ever.*—God is endlessly existent; the Being who is, and was, and is to come. ¶ *Cast their crowns.*—Why they wore those crowns we have shown under ver. 4. But when engaged in acts of worship, they are represented as taking them from their heads, and laying them down before the throne. The purport of this is, that they were moved

ders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and

to say, "In thy sight we are, O Lord, as nothing. Thou art our Creator. All we are thou hast caused us to be. And although thou hast honored us by making us kings and priests in thy church, still we know, that of ourselves alone, we are not worthy of distinction. We render all the glory to thee."

11. *Thou art worthy.*—The song which they sung is one of great significance. It consists of three parts, and is in fact the substance of all the anthems of praise contained in the Apocalypse. 1st. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power." 2d. "For thou hast created all things." 3d. "And for thy pleasure they are and were created." God's worthiness to receive homage from his creatures arises from the fact that he is their Creator, and that he has made them for a great and glorious purpose. He made them for his pleasure. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezk. xxxiii. 11, and therefore he did not create them for endless death; and although the wicked *die*, temporarily, this is not the end in which God rests as his design, for he has no pleasure in their death as such, and permits its reign only for a time, and for a good purpose. Adam Clarke has a fine remark on this passage: "God made all things for his pleasure; and through the same motive he preserves. Hence, it is most evident, that he hateth nothing that he hath made; and could have made no intelligent creature with the design to make it eternally miserable. It is strange that a contrary supposition has ever entered into the heart of man; and it is high time that the

power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

benevolent nature of the Supreme God should be fully vindicated from aspersions of this kind." Thus we have seen that the fourth chapter of the Revelation contains a hieroglyphical representation of the supposed dwelling-place of God, of the attributes of the Deity, and the court of heaven. God is described as worthy of the highest worship from all beings in heaven and on earth. In closing our notes on this chapter it is proper to remark, that the imagery is kept up in the revelator's mind through the whole Apocalypse. See iv. 6, 8, 9; v. 6, 14; vi. 1, 6; vii. 11; xiv. 3; xv. 7; xix. 4.

#### CHAPTER V.

1. *And I saw.*—John here continues the vision which he commenced to describe in the preceding chapter. He had painted the supposed celestial residence, with the throne of God, and the retinue that surrounded him, and rendered him divine honors; and he now proceeds, in the same style, to the rest of his vision. ¶ *In the right hand.*—God held the book; it was the record of his will; it was in his care; and could not be revealed until the proper time, and the proper revelator came. ¶ *A book written within and on the back side.*—Book is not so good a translation as the word *roll*. The books of the ancients, in outward form and construction, were very different from ours. When we read, as in Rev. vi. 14, that heaven departed as a book when it is rolled together, we see the absurdity of translating the Greek word in every case by book; and hence the translators render it in that verse by *scroll*. The books of the ancients consisted of long scrolls, generally parchments, sewed or pasted together, and fastened at the ends to two rollers. In the case before us the

#### CHAPTER V.

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the

book is said to have been written "within and on the back side." How could a mere English reader understand this? To such a reader the last term thus applied would be understood to mean the cover, which is not very fit for being written on; and would, besides, contain no more than might have been contained in one additional leaf, though the book had consisted of a thousand leaves. Now, the long scrolls or books of the ancients were seldom written but on one side, here said to be within, because that side was turned inward in rolling. When any one of these scrolls was written on both sides, it contained twice as much as if written in the usual way. See Ezek. ii. 9, 10. The chief intention of the revelator, in mentioning this circumstance, must have been to signify that this volume was replete with information, and that its contents were not to be measured by its size. — (Campbell, Diss. ii. part i. sec. 3.) ¶ *Sealed.*—Is not this the same book referred to by Daniel? "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end;" xii. 4. "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end;" ver. 9. Daniel had foretold the destruction coming upon Jerusalem; but he was directed to seal the roll until the time of the end. When the prophet foretold an event that was not to be of speedy occurrence, he was directed to seal up the sayings as if no use was to be made of the writings at that time, but the fulfilment was to be waited for. If, however, the event was near at hand, then the roll was for immediate use; it was not to be laid away; it was to be kept open. Hence we read, at the conclusion of the Apocalypse, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, *for the time is at*

throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the

*hand ;”* xxii. 10. ¶ *Seven seals.*—The book (or rather roll) was sealed with seven seals. It was divided into seven different parts, and each part was sealed by itself. This is easily understood, if we keep in mind the idea of the roll. One part was written, and rolled up and sealed. Another was then written, rolled upon the former, and also sealed ; and so on to the end. Thus, although there was but one roll, or book, there were seven parts to it, each part being sealed by itself. It might have been divided into more parts, but *seven* is the perfect number of the Apocalypse, and hence that division. These parts could be taken off and read one after the other ; and thus one seal would be opened at a time. The account of the opening of these seals we shall find in the 6th, 7th and 8th chapters of the Apocalypse. They are the seven seals into which John was permitted to look, one after another. When John wrote the Book of Revelation, the end was near. He foretold things that were “*shortly* to come to pass.” The time for unsealing Daniel’s book had come. It was the book of God’s dealings with the Jews, or his will concerning the punishment of that people. Jesus had foretold their destruction ; he had unfolded the purpose of God respecting them, and thus had opened the sealed book.

2. *A strong angel.*—We take advantage of this place to offer certain remarks on the angelology of the Apocalypse. It has already been intimated by us, that John makes much use of angels in his descriptions. The heathen had long believed in the existence of spiritual intelligences, such as we call angels, both good and bad. The Jews unquestionably became infected with their notions. The metaphorical language of the Bible, therefore, is sometimes framed

as if the heathen notions on these subjects were correct ; but we have no belief that Jesus or his apostles intended to recognize the heathen fables concerning spirits to be true, any more than they intended to acknowledge the doctrine of actual possessions. That there are good angels, who execute the will of God, we allow. It is consistent both with Scripture and reason to think so. But that there is a chief prince of darkness, the leader in all that is evil, the tempter of mankind, having a legion of ministers or imps at his command, is unreasonable, and exists only in the language of allegory. God is omnipotent. He shares dominion with none. We do not hold the opinion of the Manicheans, viz., the existence of two eternally opposite principles. Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. This will account for all sin, without the agency of any other tempter. But in the parables, metaphors, and allegories of the Bible, evil spirits are introduced, not to acknowledge their real existence, but for scenical purposes. Did Jesus intend to acknowledge the Jewish ideas of heaven, when he spoke of Abraham’s bosom ? or the heathen notions of hades, when he spoke of the great gulf ? Dr. Macknight says, “In parabolical discourses, provided the doctrines inculcated are strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of the vulgar, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with.”—(Par. and Com. on Luke xvi.) We reject, therefore the notion of evil angels. God is good ; and the messengers, who fulfil his pleasure, who inhabit his presence, must be good also. So much we should infer from the Scriptures. The angel who came down

book, and to loose the seals thereof?

from heaven to announce to the shepherds the birth of the Redeemer is a proof of the existence of good angels. But here let us remark, that we do not suppose all the good angels John mentions in the Apocalypse were actual existences, any more than the throne was an actual throne, or the four living creatures, or the four and twenty elders, were actual beings. They are introduced to fill up the imagery, and are to be regarded as merely scenical, like the cherubim and flaming sword which guarded Eden, after the expulsion of our first parents; Gen. iii. 24. The angels introduced by John may be classed as follows:

1. The apocalyptical angel, who revealed the whole Apocalypse to John, and who is mentioned only at the beginning and the close; Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6, 8.

2. The angels of the churches, representing the leaders or ministers of those churches; i. 20; ii. 1, 8, 12, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14.

3. Angels of proclamation; v. 2; viii. 13; xiv. 6, 8, 9, 15; xviii. 1, 2, 21.

4. Angels round about the throne, to adore and honor the Father, who were innumerable; v. 11; vii. 11.

5. Angels of the elements, viz., Of the wind; vii. 1. Of fire; xiv. 18. Of the waters; xvi. 5.

6. Angel of the seal of God; vii. 2.

7. Angels of destruction; vii. 2. Here may also be put the angel with a sickle; xiv. 17, 19. The seven angels of the plagues; xv. 1, 6, 7, 8; xvi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17; xvii. 1, 3, 7, 15; xxi. 9, 17.

8. Angels of presence. Of these there were seven, who are sometimes represented by seven lamps, and again by seven eyes; i. 4; iii. 5. They did the duty of trumpet angels; viii. 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13; ix. 1, 13, 14; x. 7; xi. 15; xiv. 10.

9. Angel of the golden censer; viii. 3, 4, 5.

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the

10. Angel of the bottomless pit; ix. 11.

11. Angels (four) in the river Euphrates; ix. 14, 15.

12. Angel who declared the end of time; x. 1, 5, 8, 9, 10; xi. 1.

13. Angels of Michael; xii. 7.

14. Angels of the Dragon; xii. 7, 9.

15. Angel of the altar; xvi. 7.

16. Angel of the sun; xix. 17.

17. Angel with the key of the bottomless pit; xx. 1—3.

18. Angels of the gates of the New Jerusalem; xxi. 12.

We repeat that these angels are not to be regarded, in all cases, as actual beings. Some of them were so, as the angels of the seven churches; but in general they are merely scenical, and are introduced to preserve the forms of the allegory, or drama. The angel mentioned in the verse now under examination, was one of the angels of proclamation, who inquired, with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

¶ *Open the book.*—The book was certainly the one mentioned in the preceding verse; and, as we have said, it was the one which Daniel was ordered to seal up. The opening of the book shows that the events foretold by Daniel, and which he was ordered to seal up because they were not to be fulfilled in his day, were about to take place at the time the revelator wrote. Daniel's description is in the following words: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time"; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and

earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to

some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever;" Dan. xii. 1—3. This certainly had respect to the destruction of Jerusalem; for so our Lord himself applied the prophecy, Matt. xxiv. 21. The judgment mentioned by Daniel was the judgment which took place at that time; John v. 22—29. Compare carefully all the texts here named. The book which Daniel sealed being about to be opened, shows that the events foretold by that prophet are those which are described by the revelator in the second section of the Apocalypse, and that they referred to the destruction of Jerusalem. For the opening of the seven seals, see chapters vi. vii. and viii.

3. *Heaven, earth, neither under the earth.* — The meaning here is simply this: no man was there in the universe who could break the seven seals of the book. Heaven, earth and under the earth, is a periphrasis for the universe. See remarks on Rev. v. 13. No man could disclose the meaning of the sealed roll of Daniel; it was not in the power of human reason or philosophy to foretell events yet future. Daniel's prophecy had respect to events that were far future when he wrote; they were also future, but were near at hand, when the revelator wrote. Who should foretell them? Who should be able to show with certainty the matters to which Daniel referred, and trace them out in their several particulars? No mere man could do it. The angel challenged; and no man could answer.

4. *I wept much.* — That is, the revelator wept much. This is in keeping with the general character of this part of the vision. As it would have

open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the

been a matter of very great sorrow to all good Christians if the sealed vision of Daniel had not been opened to their understandings, so the revelator represents himself as weeping when no man dare come forward at the challenge of the angel. We think this is all that the imagery of these three verses is designed to convey.

5. *One of the elders.* — That is, one of the four-and-twenty elders mentioned in the preceding chapter. This is introduced merely to fill up the imagery, and to prepare the reader for what is to come. ¶ *The lion.* — The lion is the king of beasts. It is a remarkable fact that both Jesus and the adversary are compared to the lion. Compare 1 Peter v. 8 with the passage before us. The reason is, that the lion is the king of beasts, — an animal of great power. The lion, when he stands for the adversary, is enraged, — a roaring, furious lion. ¶ *Of the tribe of Juda.* — Judah was one of the sons of Jacob; Gen. xxix. 35. He it was who saved the life of Joseph; who suggested to his brethren intent on his death, the selling of him to the Ishmaelites; Gen. xxxvii. 20—22 and 26—27. He was always regarded as the most powerful of all Jacob's sons. When the dying patriarch called his children around him to tell them what should befall them in the latter days, he said, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee—Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" Gen. xlix. 8, 9. The twelve tribes into which the Jews were divided were named after Jacob's twelve sons. These twelve

Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed

to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

tribes continued united as one state, one people, and one monarchy, till after the death of Solomon, when ten of the tribes revolted from the house of David, and formed the kingdom of Israel. Judah's tribe was the most powerful and numerous. He gave his name ultimately to all the descendants of his father, — Judæi, or Jews, and to the promised land they had inherited, Judea. In consequence of the superiority of Judah and his tribe, some striking emblem was necessary for their banner; and from the words of his dying parent, choice was made of the lion. Judah continued a distinct tribe until the Messiah came; Gen. xlix. 10. From these facts will easily be gathered the reason why Jesus was compared to the lion of the tribe of Judah. He sprung from that tribe; Heb. vii. 14. That was the most powerful tribe, and existed until his birth. It was to give an idea of the Redeemer's power that he was compared to the lion, the king of beasts; and as the lion was the distinguishing emblem of the tribe of Judah, and as our Lord belonged to that tribe, he was called "the lion of the tribe of Judah." ¶ *Root of David.* — Jesus is called in another place, "the root and offspring of David;" Rev. xxii. 16. It will be time enough to consider the apparent confusion of figures in that phraseology, when we come to the place. Jesus is called "the root of Jesse," David's Father; Isa. xi. 10; comp. Rom. xv. 12; and for the same reason, "the root of David." The family of David sprang from Judah; and David was king of that tribe. The greatest fact in its history was the fact that our Lord sprang from it; and perhaps it was in reference to this event, in part, that God directed the minds of the people to take the lion, the emblem of majesty and strength, as their emblem. They would probably not have been distinguished in

this manner, had it not been foreseen by prophetic vision that our Lord would spring from that tribe. In a very important sense, therefore, he was the cause of its greatness, and consequently of the distinction given to Jesse and his son David. He was their Lord. David in spirit called him Lord; Matt. xxii. 42—45. For this reason he is said to have been the Root of David. David, in his greatness, grew up as a branch out of the greatness of Judah; and our Lord was the principal source of the greatness of that tribe. ¶ *Prevailed to open the book.* — And how? Because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. Had not the Father gifted him with more than human wisdom, he could not have foretold the future but near-approaching calamities of the Jews. Jesus was a prophet, as well as a priest and a king. He therefore could prevail to open the sealed book of the future. The Spirit of God rested upon him, — the spirit of wisdom and understanding, — the spirit of counsel and might, — the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; Isa. xi. 2. Examine our Lord's prophecies. He foretold the defection of Judas; he forewarned his followers that they would desert him; he assured Peter that before the dawn of the coming day he would deny him thrice; he foretold his own death, and the sacrificial character of it; his resurrection from the dead, and the length of time which should intervene between his death and his resurrection; he foretold his appearance in Jerusalem after his resurrection; the preaching of the gospel throughout the then known world; and the wonderful catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem, with all its accompaniments of wonders and sufferings. He was indeed a prophet, and he prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6. *In the midst of the throne, &c.* —

6 An. I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the

midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes,

The meaning here seems to be as follows: I saw, between the throne and the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders who were seated round about the throne. This would bring the Lamb the nearest to the throne of any, except him who sat upon it. Jesus shares the honor of heaven with the Father. He is exalted far above principalities and powers, at the right hand of the majesty on high. The throne is therefore called "the throne of God and the Lamb;" Rev. xxii. 1. ¶ *A Lamb*.—This is the emblem which the revelator delighted to apply to the Lord Jesus. It is a figure borrowed from the sacrifices of the Jews. The lamb was used in sacrifice; and being the most harmless and innocent of animals, and Jesus being a sin-offering for the whole world, he is called "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world;" John i. 29, 36. Such was the origin of the figure. Isaiah represents Jesus under that emblem; lili. 7; and this matter came up for consideration between Philip and the Ethiopian; Acts viii. 32. With the exception of the instances referred to, and an additional one in Peter, no other New Testament writer mentions Christ under the figure of a Lamb, except John. And it is difficult for us to resist the conviction that Peter quoted his language from the Apocalypse; compare 1 Pet. i. 19, 20, with Rev. xiii. 8. If this supposition be correct, the date of the Apocalypse was much earlier than critics generally have placed it. For instances in which John in his Gospel speaks of Christ as a Lamb, see ch. i. 29, 36. For the occurrence of the metaphor in the Apocalypse, see v. 6, 8, 12, 13; vi. 1, 16; vii. 9, 10, 14, 17; xii. 11; xiii. 8; xiv. 1, 4, 10; xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 7, 9; xxi. 9, 14, 22, 23, 27; xxii. 1. ¶ *Slain*.—The revelator

says, this Lamb had the appearance of having been slain. This is an evident reference to the crucifixion of Jesus, and it serves to fix the application more directly upon him. "A Lamb as it had been slain" was an expressive emblem of "Jesus and him crucified." What marks there were about the Lamb to denote that he had been offered in sacrifice, we shall not undertake to conjecture. There could arise no possible benefit from it. Without it we get the great fact intended to be conveyed, viz., that the Lamb which appeared before the throne was one which had been manifestly offered in sacrifice; and was, therefore, a very fit emblem of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the altar of sacrifice for the sins of all men. ¶ *Having seven horns*.—The horn is a sign of power. All animals which have horns find their power in them. They are their means of defence. The horn was a very common metaphor among the ancients. The Lord exalted the horn of David, and the horn of his people; he breaketh the horn of the ungodly; he cutteth off the horn of Moab; he cutteth off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel. Being about to represent Jesus under the figure of a Lamb, and wishing also to ascribe great power to him, no metaphor that could be conceived of would have been more agreeable to the prevalent manner of writing at the time, than to invest the Lamb with horns; and as seven was a number denoting completeness and perfection, seven horns conveyed the idea of perfect power. ¶ *Seven eyes*.—Here is the same number of eyes as of horns; and the seven eyes, we are told, are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. It is remarkable how a slight circumstance will sometimes make an apparently difficult

which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the

matter very plain. How did the prophet Zechariah represent the all-pervading vision of God? Ans. By "seven eyes;" ch. iii. 9. And in the next chapter he said, "they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth;" iv. 10. Here, evidently, the revelator found his metaphor; and there is another metaphor in this section of Zechariah's prophecy, of which we shall see, in another place, that the revelator made great use. By the seven eyes of the Lamb, sent forth, as the angels of God, unto all the earth, was signified his all-pervading vision.

7. *And he [the Lamb] came and took the book.*—Did the Lamb take the book? inquires Prof. Stuart; or was the head only a lamb, and the rest a human figure? Thus he goes on with his questions. It seems to us that the true explanation is, that the revelator passes easily from the metaphor to the being signified by it. The Lamb, i. e., he who was signified by the Lamb, took the book. ¶ *Out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.*—That is, he derived all his knowledge from the Father. The latter is represented as having the roll in possession, and as giving it into the hands of Jesus Christ, who is mentioned under the figure of the Lamb. The events that were revealed by the opening of the seals, one after another, must be looked for in the succeeding chapters. The remainder of this chapter is occupied with a description of the worship rendered to the Lamb, in consequence of his proceeding to open the book, and also to the Father.

8. *Fell down before the Lamb.*—The living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb. This was the common form of respect. It was often done when worship, especially divine worship,

book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken

was not intended. But worship was intended in this place; for there are all the accompaniments of worship. The worshippers all have harps in their hands, and golden vials full of odors. Some think it wrong to worship Christ. They believe that God alone ought to be worshipped. Christ they declare is a creature, and divine honors ought not to be paid to him. To this we do not agree. We allow that God alone ought to be worshipped *as God*; and the living creatures and the elders, as we shall see, did not worship the Lamb as God the Father. It is true that Christ is a creature; but he is also something else. He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and this can be said of no other being in heaven or on earth. If by divine honors be meant the honors due to God alone, we allow that such honors ought not to be paid to Christ; but if by divine honors be merely meant honors paid to a divine person, then Jesus is entitled to divine honors. We cannot possibly, in any way, understand the chapter which we are now examining, if Jesus may not rightfully be worshipped. But more on this subject as we proceed. ¶ *Having every one of them harps.*—This certainly is figurative, for it cannot be supposed there could be harps in the celestial, spiritual, immortal state. The harp was an instrument that had been long known to the Jews, and was much used in their temple service; see 1 Chron. xiii. 8; xv. 16; 2 Chron. v. 12; Neh. xii. 27; Psa. xxxiii. 2. John's vision of heaven seems to be drawn almost wholly from the arrangements for the religious services of the Jews; and the worship in heaven is made to bear a strong resemblance to that of the temple. For further remarks on the mention made of the harp in the Scriptures.

the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden

vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take

see notes on Rev. xiv. 2. ¶ *Vials full of odors.*—In the temple services, incense was wafted unto the throne of God. The incense was mingled with rich odors. It was a representation of the prayers of the saints. While the priest offered incense within, the people prayed without; and the priest, by the incense, sent up the prayers of the people. See Luke i. 10: "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense." This agrees with Psa. cxli. 2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as incense*, and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice." Did not the revelator get his figure from this verse? ¶ *Which are the prayers of saints.*—He evidently set forth the prayers of the saints as incense. That these saints were on earth, not in the immortal state, is evident from verse 10, below. Dr. Hammond says, "It is evident that the saints here are the Christian people upon earth, and not the saints which reign in heaven. And this also is agreeable to the notion of odors, by which their prayers are expressed. For those refer to the incense which the priests were wont to offer in the sanctuary whilst the people prayed without, (Luke i. 10,) and their prayers were supposed to go up with that incense to heaven. By this it also appears that the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders which have here the vials in their hands, as also the harps, the one to denote the prayers, the other the praises of the Christians, are the apostles and bishops of Judea, (as in the laying of the scene appeared, ch. iv.,) whose office it was to present the prayers and praises of the Christians to God; and so by all these together, the Christian persecuted church of Judea (and by consent with them all

other Christians over the world) are represented here, as those that had now their prayers heard, and those by the destruction of their persecutors turned into praises."—See Com. on ver. 8.

9. *And they sung.*—Who sung? Ans. The four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, mentioned in the preceding verse as falling down before the Lamb. ¶ *New song.*—And this new song is in the following words: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain," &c. This was called a *new* song, as if it never had been sung before; for who could sing the song of redeeming love, until the Lamb was slain? No such song was ever sung in the religious services of the Jews; they sung the praises of God; but never sung of the redemption of the world through Christ. The song of redeeming love, the song of redemption from sin and error, and the moral exaltation of men through Jesus Christ,—that is the new song. None can sing this song except such as have been redeemed by Christ; and it shall be sung at last by all, when every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; Phil. ii. 9—11. Rev. xiv. 3: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and *no man* could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, *which were redeemed from the earth.*" The new song, therefore, must be the song of redeeming love; which all will sing, when the work of redemption is complete. Is it not certain, then, that the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders stand, in this case, as representatives of the redeemed? ¶ *Thou art worthy.*—It is a song of praise to the

the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Lamb. The phraseology is somewhat similar to what we found in Rev. iv. 11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power," &c. And why was the Lamb worthy? and what was he worthy of? We shall find answers to these questions in the following words.

¶ *To take the book.*—He was worthy to take the book, and to loose the seals thereof. There was an honor in being permitted to do this; and the Lamb was worthy of that honor.

¶ *Thou wast slain.*—This was the reason why he was worthy. He had given himself up to the cruel death of the cross, and suffered and died. He had not done this merely for the obtaining of glory. His own advantage was not what he was seeking.

¶ *And hast redeemed us.*—It was for the good of others that he suffered and died. What more could he do? It is the highest gift a man can bestow, to surrender his own life. Such was the sacrifice Jesus made; and on that account he was worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof. ¶ *By thy blood.*—That is, by thy death. In consequence of Christ's death and resurrection, [and the latter could not have taken place without the former,] they had been redeemed. They had believed on him; they had obtained a knowledge of his word; and by faith in his death, and resurrection, and teachings, they had been delivered from their errors and their sins. This is what is meant by being redeemed by the blood of Christ. The blood is the metaphor for his death and for his doctrine. ¶ *Out of every kindred, &c.*

—These were the first fruits; they were not the general harvest. They were redeemed out of every nation,

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts,

and kindred, and people and tongue. They were not Jewish Christians only; they were gathered from every nation; from the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The Gentiles were to praise, and honor, and glorify, Christ as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. And what was to become of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, out of whom these early converts, these first fruits, were gathered? Were they always to remain strangers to Christ? We shall see as we proceed.

10. *Kings and priests.*—This is still a part of the new song. The redeemed acknowledged that the Lamb had made them kings and priests unto God. They reigned with Christ in his moral kingdom. They had power over the nations to rule them; Rev. ii. 26, 27; also, i. 6. They joined with Christ in his kingly and priestly office; and so all true Christians will do, until he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father. ¶ *On the earth.*—This part of the song is surely not to be forgotten. This living and reigning with Christ is *on the earth*. Faithful Christians are kings and priests unto God, *on the earth*. How does Jesus reign on the earth? In what sense is he a king? He reigns over the hearts and consciences of men; he is a spiritual king. Every pure-hearted Christian is joined with him in this reign, and exercises a like influence, though vastly below him, of course, in point of power.

11. *Of many angels.*—In his further description of the celestial abode, John saw vast numbers of angels round about the throne, and round about the beasts and the elders. The number of them was illimitable. We

and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice,

perceive here, that the beasts and elders are not to be regarded as representatives of angels, but of the church on earth. ¶ *Number of them.*

— That is, the number of the angels was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. And what does this mean, only that they were innumerable? This phraseology is borrowed from the Old Testament. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place;" *Psa. lxxviii. 17.* Possibly the revelator had his mind on this passage, and possibly it was on the words of Daniel. "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;" *vii. 10.* The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews copies this phraseology in his description of the heavenly Jerusalem. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels;" *xii. 22.*

12. *Loud voice.* — The mingling of so many voices would be well described by a loud voice. The intention of the revelator was not to give the idea that every one spoke as loudly as he could; but that such an innumerable host making an ascription together, it would of course be loud. This, therefore, furnishes no justification for the vociferous exhortations and prayers of some Christians. ¶ *Worthy the Lamb.* — How can we refrain from quoting one verse of that beautiful hymn of Watts?

"Worthy the Lamb, that died," they cry,

"To be exalted thus;"

"Worthy the Lamb," our hearts reply,

"For he was slain for us."

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which

They worshipped the Lamb that was slain; but they worshipped him not as God, for the worship of the Lamb is in all cases kept distinct from the worship of him "who sitteth on the throne." The Lamb is not in a single instance represented as the being that sitteth on the throne. But even though the Lamb is not worshipped as God, but as the Redeemer, yet in the latter character he is "Worthy to receive [ascriptions of] power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." This is a magnificent eulogium. And here we see again the tendency of the revelator's mind to the perfect number seven. The points of ascription were seven, and the evident intent was to frame as grand an eulogium as the mind could conceive.

13. *And every creature, &c.* — Here was something additional to all that had been said. The first worship which John saw rendered was offered by the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, viz., the representatives of the church on earth; *Rev. iv. 9—11.* They fell down before Him that sat on the throne. They worshipped, at first, the Father only, for the Lamb had not then been seen. When the Lamb took the book, to open the knowledge of it to men, then the four living creatures and the elders fell down before him, and rendered the prayers and praises of all the redeemed, who had been taken from "every kindred and tongue and people and nation." But a sublimer scene was yet to appear. All the hosts of heaven joined in the worship: angels, the number of whom was "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," said with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. Here all heaven is included, as well.

is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

as all who had been redeemed on earth, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" ver. 9. To understand the true intent of the revelator in these matters, we must look carefully at his object and his plan. The great subject of all the praise was, that the Lamb had prevailed to open the seals of the book; ver. 9. All that follows in this chapter is designed to reflect honor upon him, in connection with the Father. That is the great point at which the revelator aims. His object was not to teach how many Christ died to save, — or how many had at that time been redeemed, — or how many angels there were, — or whether all mankind shall at last be saved. We say, these were not his objects. We may, indeed, very safely make inferences from what he said, in regard to these subjects. His remarks are extraordinary, and very valuable, as affecting important questions in theology; but those points were not the subjects to which he directed his descriptions. His whole object was to glorify the Lamb. He carries him up to the highest point of honor; and puts all beings but God himself beneath him. And what is the plan followed by the revelator? We regard the passage, from the 8th to the 14th verse of this chapter, as one of the most eloquent which the Apocalypse contains. There are three classes who are summoned to aid in ascribing glory to the Lamb. 1st. Those who had been redeemed out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue. 2d. All the angelic world, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. And as though this were not sufficiently brilliant, he summoned, 3d. "Every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them." We are inclined to regard the whole as sceni-

cal, — the creation of the revelator's glowing fancy, — to set forth, in the highest manner of which he was capable, the honor and glory which were due to the Lamb of God. Such being the principle on which we receive the language, we now proceed to make such inferences as seem to us to be justifiable.

That the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, existed only in the imagination of John, has already been stated by us. But they formed the court of heaven, in John's description, and he calls all heaven to his aid in rendering honor to the Lamb. The second class that were named had an actual existence, viz., the redeemed. There were many who had been brought to know Christ, and had been redeemed out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue. These also John calls to his aid in magnifying the Lamb. In the third place, he summons all mankind, — every intelligent creature in the universe, to aid him in praising the Lamb; and the language which he puts into their mouths is this, — "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." Some writers, and among them Prof. Stuart in his late work on the Apocalypse, would try to make out that the revelator did not intend to embrace *all mankind* in his description; that the word *all* here, is not intended to signify every one, but is used merely in a general sense. For ourself, we shall despair of ever being able to frame language which will include all mankind, if this does not. It seems to us that the phraseology of the revelator is peculiar. He *must* have intended all intelligent beings. This is the grandest periphrasis in the whole Bible, the fullest circumlocution. It is no wonder that Prof. Stuart said, several years ago, "Things in heaven, earth, and under

Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto

the Lamb, for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty

the earth, is a common periphrasis of the Hebrew and New Testament writers for THE UNIVERSE, (*ta pan*, or *ta panta*, the ALL, the WHOLE.)” But further, when John is speaking of those *redeemed on earth*, he says they came “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” ver. 9. But not so here in ver. 13. There is no reference made to the out of; the WHOLE (*ta panta*) are represented as praising God and the Lamb. Mark the language: “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and ALL THAT ARE IN THEM, [there is an intentional avoiding of the out of,] heard I saying, Blessing, and honor,” &c., &c.

Why should John summon less than all intelligent beings? Can any reason be assigned? Would his plan have been rendered any more perfect by summoning a part only of the human race? Those who maintain that his language had respect to a part only, ought to feel themselves able to establish the following three points: First, they should show, that the language employed by John was such as a man would naturally use in speaking of a part of the human race. Second, they should show, that for a *part* to be called on to praise Christ, and not the whole, was more consistent with the plan which John then had in his mind, than if the whole had been thus called on. And who will undertake that? Third, they should show, that for a part to be called on, and not the whole, was more consistent with the character of the Lamb of God, and the objects for which he labored as the mediator between God and men, than if the whole had been thus called on. We do not suppose, that John’s purpose in the passage we have considered was

to teach any particular theological tenet. It was not the design he had in view. He was seeking to show the praise of which Christ was worthy; and he represented all beings in the universe, especially those who had been, and who were to be, redeemed by him, as joining in his praise. One can scarcely conceive why he should have done this, why he should have used the expressive language he employed to represent all intelligent beings, if he had believed, as some Christians in this day do, that a large portion of those for whom Jesus died will never, either in time or eternity, receive any benefit from his mission. Supposing the revelator to have entertained the opinions of the Calvinistic divines, is it probable that he would have used the language which he did use? If they were engaged in a work of the imagination, to describe the honor that Jesus shall receive, would they summon all intelligent beings, without distinction, and represent them all as joining in ascriptions of praise to Christ? It is highly improbable. It seems to us very unreasonable to suppose that the revelator did not intend to embrace all intelligent beings in his description; the whole form and force of his language tend to show that he did mean to embrace them all.

14. *The four beasts said, Amen.*—They responded most devoutly to the worship rendered by every intelligent creature. ¶ *Four and twenty elders fell down,* &c.—This is the conclusion of the grand scene which the revelator’s fancy had conceived. All heaven and earth, indeed the whole universe, are described as worshipping, in the most devout and solemn manner, him that liveth forever and ever. ¶ *Liveth forever and ever.*—

elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

This phraseology may be applied to the Father or the Son: In this case, we think Jesus was intended.

## CHAPTER VI.

In the fifth chapter we had an account of the book sealed with seven seals, (ver. 1,) which the Lion of the tribe of Juda (viz., Jesus Christ) "prevailed to open, and to loose the seven seals thereof;" ver. 5. In the chapter before us, we have an account of the opening of the seals, and of the events which were revealed thereby. There is, however, this exception, that after the opening of the sixth seal the events described in all the *seventh* chapter took place, and the opening of the *seventh seal* is not made known until we come to the *eighth* chapter, ver. 1. The whole account, it must be remembered, is allegorical. By the opening of the seals, one after the other, is intended, we think, the making known of the events to the revelator. He was permitted to "come and see" what was "shortly to come to pass." As he had been previously ignorant of these events, the book in which they were said to be written was a sealed book to him. The contents were hidden; and the events being then future, no man could reveal them,—no man could break the seals,—no one could do it except the Son of God. The time had come for breaking the seals, and for making the events known. We are now to proceed to the description of the things future,—the prophetic parts of the Apocalypse. In i. 19, John was directed as follows: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." At the beginning of chap. iv. the revelator said, "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the

## CHAPTER VI.

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals,

first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which *must be hereafter*;" iv. 1. The whole of the fourth and fifth chapters are taken up with John's imaginary description of the dwelling-place of God, the court of heaven, the appearance of the Lamb, the praise rendered to him, &c. &c.; so that it is not until we come to the sixth chapter, that we find the description of the things that were to be *hereafter*. They were future in the time of John; but yet not far distant. They were "shortly to come to pass."

We have said that we have now come to the prophetic part of the Apocalypse. It is a prophecy in the form of allegory, like that of Daniel. And there is one remarkable fact, which ought to be most deeply impressed upon the reader's mind, viz., that the facts disclosed in this section of the Apocalypse are the main or principal facts which were disclosed by our Lord in his memorable prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, but most fully by the first named. The revelator scarcely records a fact, in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, which may not be found in our Lord's prophecy. The style is different, although our Lord did not neglect, in his description, the use of metaphor. The revelator, however, carries the metaphorical style much further; it spreads into the allegorical, in his hands; and his images are to be ranked among the boldest and loftiest ever conceived. To show how strictly he followed our Lord's prophecy, let us take notice of the events which our Lord foretold. These events were as follows:

1st. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, and its prevalence among all nations. "And this Gospel of the kingdom

and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come and see.

shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come ;” Matt. xxiv. 14.

2d. WARS. “And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled ; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet ;” Matt. xxiv. 6.

3d. FAMINES ; and,

4th. PESTILENCE. “And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places ;” Matt. xxiv. 7.

5th. *The darkening of the sun and moon, and the stars falling from heaven, &c., &c.* ; Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

As we progress in our examination of the chapter before us, it will be seen whether these are the subjects which are treated of therein.

1. *I saw.* — The revelator’s vision still continued. ¶ *The Lamb.* — He saw the Lamb open one of the seals. The Lamb had prevailed to open the seals ; i. e., he had obtained power to do it, and he had made it manifest that he had that power ; v. 7, 8. ¶ *One of the seven seals.* — He opened one of the seven seals, and John heard a voice, like as of thunder, which was that of one of the four living creatures, (Rev. iv. 6,) saying to him, “Come and see ;” i. e., there is something further for thee to know. Thunder, by a very natural metaphor, was regarded by the ancients as the voice of God. See John xii. 28, 29. The sound thereof comes from heaven ; it is full of majesty ; and we know of nothing on which men might more readily fix as a representative of God’s voice, than this.

2. *A white horse.* — John, in this connection, introduces four horses, whose colors were white, red, black, and pale ; verses 2, 4, 5, 8. We shall proceed to ascertain what these four horses represent ; and we shall follow the laws by which we ought to be governed, in interpreting scriptural

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown

metaphors. The horse is a noble animal, and was employed by the ancients, as well as the moderns, in war. Job’s description of the war-horse (in the 39th chapter) is highly poetical, and of great power. A man starting on any expedition, in the days of the revelator, would most probably take a horse to ride upon ; and hence the going forth of a horse represented the commencement of an expedition, and its progress in the world. John, perhaps, obtained the metaphors of his four horses from Zech. i. and vi. In the latter chapter the prophet has four horses, of different colors, to represent different expeditions. The nature of the expedition, whether it be for good or for evil, is to be determined by the color of the horse. *White* being the symbol of joy, felicity and prosperity, and *white* horses being used by victors on their days of triumph, are the symbol of certain victory and great triumph upon that account. ¶ *He that sat on him.* — Who it is rides on the white horse of the Apocalypse, may be learned by consulting Rev. xix. 11—16 : “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh

was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from

the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the

a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The "word of God" is precisely what John called Jesus; Gospel i. 1; 1 Epis. v. 7. It was Jesus, then, who sat on the *white horse*; and he had a bow, the sign of strength and victory, — and a crown, the sign of royalty. And he went forth in his kingdom, conquering and to conquer. See Psal. xlv. 3—7. Here is described the introduction of the kingdom of Christ, and the establishment of the Gospel among men. Jesus rides forth as King of Zion, with the sign of power, royalty, and victory. This, then, being descriptive of the going forth of Jesus as King in Zion, and the progress of his kingdom in the world, agrees with one of the signs which Jesus said should precede the destruction of Jerusalem. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come;" Matt. xxiv. 14.

3. *Second seal.* — The opening of the second seal called out a remark from the second beast; and he, like the first, said to the revelator, "Come and see." Another sheet was unrolled, and the revelator saw further signs.

4. *Horse that was red.* — After having described the introduction and success of the gospel, (mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 14,) the revelator saw, on the opening of the second seal, another horse, *not white*, but red, the sign of blood and slaughter. And power was given him who sat thereon

to take peace from the earth. This is certainly the metaphor for WAR. Hence it is said, "They shall kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword," showing us the second particular which we have proved was mentioned in Matt. xxiv., viz., WAR. ¶ *Take peace from the earth, or from the land.* — Here, not the whole earth, but the land of Palestine, is specially denoted, which was entirely overrun with war in a few years after the Apocalypse was written, agreeably to the prophecy of our Lord; Matt. xxiv. 6.

5. *Third seal.* — When the third section of the roll, or third seal, was unfolded, the third beast said, "Come and see." There is a symmetry preserved here; the first beast speaks of the opening of the first seal, the second of the next, and so on. And what did he see? ¶ *A black horse.* Black is the sign of affliction, disaster and anguish. The object of the revelator was to represent famine. But no color would exactly represent that; and therefore the usual color for dismay and mourning was selected. But to make the metaphor the more definite, the rider, upon the horse, bears a sign in his hand. ¶ *A pair of balances.* — And what do these represent? Every one knows that balances are used wherewith to ascertain the weight of any article; and we shall discover, in the next verse, that the balances were the sign of scarcity.

6. *A voice.* — Some voice came from among the four beasts. ¶ *A*

midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened

the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell

*measure of wheat for a penny.* — Grotius and others have observed, that a *chanix* of corn, the measure here mentioned, was a man's daily allowance, as a penny was his daily wages; so that if his daily labor could earn no more than his daily bread, without other provision for himself or his family, corn must needs bear a very high price. But whatever may be the capacity of the *chanix*, which is difficult to be determined, as it was different in different times and countries, yet such care and such regulations about the necessities of life imply some want and scarcity of them. Scarcity obligeth men to exactness in the price and measure of things. In short, the intent of the prophecy is, that corn should be provided for the people, but it should be distributed in exact measure and proportion. — (Bishop Newton.) See Whittemore on the Parables, p. 261, for further information on these subjects. See also Campbell on Gos., Dis. viii., p. i., sec. 4. Dr. Hammond says, "The scarcity of corn is such, that the price of a man's day's labor will buy no more than is wont to be thought sufficient for a man's food in a day; and if he eats that all himself, there is nothing left to provide for wife and children," &c. &c. Wheat, barley, oil and wine, were with the eastern nations of antiquity the chief supports of life. Here, then, we have a description of FAMINE, which was mentioned in Matt. xxiv. as one of the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

7. *Fourth seal.* — Here is the same symmetry as before; the fourth beast gives out the invitation at the opening of the fourth seal, "Come and see." At the opening of the other

seals there was no beast to respond, the whole four having been consecutively brought forward.

8. *A pale horse.* — There seems to be a reference here to Ezek. xiv. 21, where the prophet speaks of God sending fourscore judgments upon Jerusalem, viz., "the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast." Paleness is the sign of weakness, sickness, fainting ¶ *Name that sat on him was Death.* — We quote again Dr. Hammond: "It was a pale horse and a rider thereon, signifying great death or mortality, whether by extraordinary ways of death, the sword and famine, or by that ordinary known way of pestilence, following (as it ordinarily doth) upon these two, and sweeping away many. And these three horses, in the last three rolls, that is sword, famine, and death, or pestilence, (all named together in this matter, Matt. xxiv. 7,) should destroy the fourth part of the land of Judea, men and beasts, or else should make such a vastation that the wild beasts should increase, and be too strong for the inhabitants there. And all this but a forerunner of the far greater destructions that should afterwards be wrought among them at the siege of Titus." So far Dr. Hammond. ¶ *Hell followed with him.* — The word here translated *hell* occurs in the Apocalypse *four* times; i. 18; vi. 8; xx. 13. 14. In all these cases it is associated with death. The expression is particularly strong in the verse before us, "hell followed with him." Under the two preceding seals, the revelator had described war and famine, fruitful sources of death. His object in the metaphor we are considering was to show how

followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger,

and with death and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the

widely death would be occasioned by these evils. War and famine produced "pestilence that wasteth at noon-day." Pestilence, like the cholera for instance, or the plague, may well be represented by death, the king of terrors. On such occasions death seems to ride fearfully among the people, and hell, or the grave, follows with him. In the parallels of the Old Testament death and hades are frequently conjoined, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them;" *Psa. xlix. 14.* "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell," *hades*, the grave; *Idem, lv. 15.* We refrain from further quotations. Death is personified by several of the sacred writers. See *Job xxviii. 22; Hos. xiii. 14; Hab. ii. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 55.* "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We can make no great distinction here between death and hades, hell, translated the grave. So when it is said, "his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him," we judge it to mean nothing more than that death and destruction marked the path of the pale horse. ¶ *Power was given unto them.*—It was a wide power too,—power over the fourth part of the land, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with the beasts of the earth. Does this mean that a quarter part of the people were to be cut off by the scourges here referred to? Death reigned with fearful power. Sword and famine were the principal agencies by which he executed his will. But to these were to be added "the beasts of the earth." This is manifestly a reference to *Ezek. xiv. 21*, quoted above. If wild beasts, and not ferocious men, he intended, they follow in the course of an army,

and devour the wounded and the slain. In fine, we esteem it necessary to add only, under this verse, that it represents, more forcibly than either of the preceding, the scourges that were to fall upon the Jews. Well did Jesus weep before Jerusalem, in view of the calamities that were impending over it.

9. As there were but four beasts, and these had all spoken at the opening of the first four seals, so there is none represented as speaking at the opening of the fifth, sixth and seventh seals. ¶ *Souls of them that were slain.*—John saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, &c. This agrees with *Rev. xx. 4*, where the martyrs, notwithstanding they had been killed, are said to have lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. It is a bold *prosopopœia*, as in the case of the blood of Abel crying unto God from the ground; *Gen. iv. 10.* The martyrs were before the altar, or at the base of it, where the faithful are said to stand; *Rev. vii. 9, 14.* Souls do not signify absolutely spirits in a disembodied state. Nothing is more common in the Scriptures than the use of the word souls for persons. Paul said, "We were all in the ship two hundred three score and sixteen souls;" *Acts xxvii. 37.* Peter, speaking of the ark, said, "Wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water;" *1 Pet. iii. 20.* The import of the verse before us is, then, that the revelator saw under the altar those who had been slain. ¶ *The testimony which they held*—They were slain for their adherence to Christ. The word "held" here means, held fast. The Christians were exhorted to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering; *Heb. x. 23.* This exposed them to persecution

altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our

and to death. Jesus pre-accused the Jews of these things. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city ;" Matt. xxiii. 34. Warning to a similar effect was given to the disciples : "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake ;" Matt. xxiv. 9.

10. *How long, O Lord.* — The martyrs are represented as waiting impatiently for God to avenge himself upon those who had shed their blood ; intending nothing more than the Jews should be judged for their murders of the Christians, but that their punishment was for a short time delayed ; and this delay to judge and punish might create some discontent and impatience. The words of discontent are placed in the minds of the murdered Christians, who, by a bold figure, are represented as inquiring how long this delay was to be continued. The time had not come for the judgment to take place.

11. *White robes.* — But the martyrs were honored in the sight of God, though their enemies were not then fully punished. White robes were given to the former as signs of approbation and honor ; and for a little season they should rest, until their fellow-servants should be killed, and then their wishes should be fulfilled. How readily does this bring to mind the language of Jesus in Matt. xxiii. 34—36 : "Some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall

blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren,

ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." Vengeance was not taken upon them at once for their iniquities ; they were to "fill up the measure" of their fathers. (Matt. xxiii. 32,) and then they should be fully punished. At the time the revelator referred to, under the fifth seal, the measure was not filled up. It seemed long to those who suffered, and whose friends had been slain. The Jews seemed to them sufficiently ripe for judgment ; the measure seemed to be full ; but in the wisdom of God, it was best to forbear yet longer. When the measure of wickedness was full in the sight of God, then the Jews should be signally punished. They should be visited with a retribution so signal, that it should appear to all the world the hand of the Lord was in it. It should surely come on that generation, before all who were then on the earth should pass away. And here it may not be improper to observe, that the dreadful punishments which are prefigured in the succeeding verses were the punishments that were to fall upon the Jews, in consequence of their long continued rebellion against God, and determined persecutions of his church. But even in the midst of the deepest persecutions, the martyrs, and all who suffered for righteousness' sake, should be hon-

that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake ;

ored in the sight of all good men. All these things were to happen during that generation.

12. *The sixth seal.* — The events under the sixth seal are described under the most glowing imagery. The ancients were remarkable for this style of writing. It seems wild and extravagant to men in this age. There is nothing, however, more certain, than that changes in heaven and on earth — among the heavenly bodies and among the hills and mountains — were used by the Jewish prophets to describe political or national changes, — the building up or the overthrow of nations. Bishop Lowth says, "The Hebrew poets, to express happiness, prosperity, the instauration and advancement of states, kingdoms and potentates, make use of images taken from the most striking parts of nature, from the heavenly bodies, from the sun, moon, and stars ; which they describe as shining with increased splendor, and never setting ; the moon becomes like the meridian sun, and the sun's light is augmented seven fold ; (see Isaiah xxx. 26,) new heavens and a new earth are created, and a brighter age commences. On the contrary, the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms, is represented by opposite images: the stars are obscured, the moon withdraws her light, and the sun shines no more ; the earth quakes and the heavens tremble, and all things seem tending to their original chaos." — (Note on Isaiah xiii. 10.) ¶ *A great earthquake.* — Our Lord, in his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, associated earthquakes with famines and pestilences ; Matt. xxiv. 7 ; Mark xiii. 8 ; Luke xxi. 11. Earthquakes, or shaking of the earth, are frequently put for moral and

and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood :

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a

civil commotions, in the metaphorical style of the sacred writers. See Rev. viii. 5 ; xi. 13, 19 ; xvi. 18. See, also, Isa. ii. 19 ; xiii. 13 ; Joel iii. 16 ; Haggai ii. 6, 21 ; and many other places. This style is carried into the New Testament, and used both by Christ and his apostles ; Heb. xii. 26, 27. ¶ *Sun became black as sackcloth of hair.* — Cloth woven of black hair is of a deep blackness. Sackcloth was often of hair ; it was very coarse — of a deep black ; and was worn, therefore, in seasons of trouble. The sun became black in the revelator's imagination. In reality, such a thing never happened ; but we have already asserted the fact, in the language of Bishop Lowth, (which is given as a sample of what might be quoted from many authors,) that the Jews were in the habit of representing great changes on earth, by changes in the heavenly bodies. The heavens sometimes, in their descriptions, are covered with blackness, as when a terrific cloud, shutting from our vision half the hemisphere, arises with fearful violence, heaven seems as if it were about to expend itself in wrath upon the earth. See 1 Kings xviii. 45 : Isa. 1. 3 ; Jer. iv. 28. ¶ *Moon became as blood.* — This is precisely the style in which the prophets foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. "The earth shall quake before them ; the heavens shall tremble ; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining ;" Joel ii. 10. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come ;" 31. See, also, Matt. xxiv. 29, quoted below.

13. *Stars of heaven fell.* — This, also, is precisely in the prophetic

fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

style. Ezek. xxxii. 7; Daniel viii. 10; Joel ii. 10; iii. 15. It represented civil or political commotions. The metaphor of stars falling like figs from a tree was used by Isaiah to represent the fall of the powers of Idumea; xxxiv. 4, 5. See below.

14. *Heaven departed as a scroll.*—The metaphor here, also, is from Isaiah; see the verse last quoted. The metaphors in the 12th, 13th and 14th verses are clearly a description of the events that attended the destruction of Jerusalem; and are given almost precisely in the language that our Lord applied to that event, and that ancient prophecy applied to the temporal judgments that God sent upon rebellious countries. In Matt. xxiv. 29, we read, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, [referring to the tribulation of wars, pestilences and famines, of which he had been speaking,] shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Now, no intelligent commentator of the present day has any doubt, that in the use of these splendid metaphors, our Lord was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. "That event took place *immediately* after the tribulation of those days;" and in verse 34 it is said, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Now look at the passage in the sixth of Revelations, and see if there be not changes in the sun, moon and stars. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." and the heaven departed as a scroll, &c. These are the very figures employed by our Lord to describe the

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain

events attending the destruction of Jerusalem; and taken in connection with the preceding signs of war, pestilence and famine, the whole seems to denote, beyond a doubt, that it is that event which is spoken of in the sixth chapter of Revelations. Such, also, are almost the precise terms in which the prophet describes the destruction of Idumea. See Isaiah 34th chap. "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host [viz., the stars] shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree;" Isa. xxxiv. 4. And yet all this splendid imagery is expressly said by the prophet to refer to the destruction of Idumea, ver. 5. We cannot forbear quoting the following very intelligent remarks from Dr. Lightfoot, on the whole series of events mentioned under the six seals: "The opening of the six seals in this chapter speaks the ruin and rejection of the Jewish nation, and the desolation of their city, which is now very near at hand. The first seal opened shows Christ setting forth in battle array and avengement against them, as Psa. xli. 4, 5. And this the New Testament speaketh very much and very highly of; one while calling it his 'coming in clouds,'—another while, his 'coming in his kingdom,'—and sometimes, his 'coming in power and great glory;' and the like. Because his plaguing and destroying of the nation that crucified him, that so much opposed and wrought mischief against the gospel, was the first evidence that he gave in sight of all the world of his being Christ; for, till then, he, and his gospel, had been in humility, as I may say, as to the eyes of men,—he persecuted whilst he was on earth, and they persecuted after him, and no course taken with

and island were moved out of their places.

them that so used both; but now he awakes, shows himself, and makes himself known by the judgment that he executeth. The three next seals opening, shows the means by which he did destroy, namely, those three sad plagues that had been threatened so oft, and so sure, by the prophets, 'sword, famine, and pestilence.' The second seal opened, sends out one upon a red horse, to take peace from the earth, and that men should destroy one another; he carried a great 'sword.' The third seal opening, speaks of famine, when corn for scarcity should be weighed like spicery in a pair of balances. The fourth seal sends out one on a pale horse, whose name was Death. The opening of the fifth seal reveals a main cause of the vengeance, namely, the blood of the saints which had been shed, crying, and which was to be required of that generation. These souls are said to cry from under the altar, either in allusion to the blood of creatures sacrificed, poured at the foot of the altar, or according to the Jews' tenet, that 'all just souls departed are under the throne of glory.' Answer to their cry is given, that the number of their brethren that were to be slain was not yet fulfilled; and they must rest till that should be; and then avengement in their behalf should come. This speaks suitable to that which we observed lately, that now times were begun of bitter persecution, 'an hour of temptation,' the Jews and devil raging, till the Lord should something cool that fury by the ruin of that people. The opening of the sixth seal [ver. xii. 13] shows the destruction itself, in those borrowed terms that the Scripture useth to express it by, namely, as if it were the destruction of the whole world; the sun darkened, the stars falling, the heaven departing, and the earth dissolved; and that conclusion, [ver.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and

16,] 'They shall say to the rocks, Fall on us,' &c., doth not only warrant, but even enforce us to understand and construe these things in the sense that we do; for Christ applies these very words to the very same thing; Luke xxiii. 30. And here is another, and to me a very satisfactory reason, why to place the showing of these visions to John, and his writing of this book, before the desolation of Jerusalem." — (Harmony of the New Testament, Works, Milman's Ed., iii. 335—337.) ¶ *Every mountain and island.* — The mountains are usually places of strength and security. Lot was advised to escape to the mountains from the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah; Gen. xix. 17. Jesus directed his disciples, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, to "flee unto the mountains;" Matt. xxiv. 16. But to signify times of great commotion and distress, the very mountains are moved. To express a high state of joy, the mountains and hills are sometimes personified. The mountains "skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs;" Ps. cxiv. 6. "Praise the Lord, mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars;" cxlviii. 9. See also Isa. xlv. 23; xlix. 13; lv. 12. But to denote the overthrow of nations, princes, leaders, governments, the mountains are melted, shaken, thrown down. God touches the mountains and they smoke; Ps. cxlv. 5. The day of the Lord is upon all the mountains and the hills that are lifted up, (Isa. ii. 14,) where they seem to be put for proud men. They are put for the leaders of Israel, Ezek. vi. 2, 3; xxxvi. 1, 8. To show the overthrow of these leaders, there is great confusion in the mountains. They "tremble," Jer. vi. 24; they "quake," Nah. i. 5; they are "thrown down," Ezek. xxxviii. 20; they are "removed," Isa. liv. 10; they "melt," Isa. xxxiv. 3; lxiv. 1; Micah i. 4; Nah. i. 7. When

the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains :

the revelator said, "Every mountain and island were moved out of their places," it means, we think, as is expressed in the following verse, that the leaders, being in rebellion against God, were put down.

15. *And the kings of the earth.* — The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, and every bond-man and every free-man, &c. These men, rulers high in power, represented by high mountains, were to be moved out of their places. ¶ *Hide themselves in the dens.* — They were filled with fear; they sought to escape; and as dens are places of concealment, they hid themselves in the dens, among the rocks of the mountains. But why were they afraid? Why did they wish to hide themselves? See the following verse.

16. *Said to the mountains and rocks.* — Here the mountains and rocks are personified; they are addressed as if they had intelligence and the power of motion. ¶ *Fall on us and hide us.* — We should think, at the first glance, that it could be no desirable thing to men to have the mountains fall on them. It would seem almost to make death certain and speedy. But let us be careful to get the right view of the matter. The mountains and hills are represented as being in motion; they are "moved out of their places;" there is a great commotion; some awful calamity is at hand; and the enemies of Jesus cry to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us." For what purpose? To "hide us," not to kill us. In thy falling, make dens and walls round about us. Fall in such a manner as to hide us from observation. ¶ *From the face of him, &c.* — This was the cause of their

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb :

17 For the great day of his

fear, — the wrath of God and the Lamb. Hide us from it, they cry. This phraseology seems to make it the more certain that the revelator was treating of the woes coming upon Jerusalem; for our Lord applies the same, in his memorable prophecy, to the time of those woes. "But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us;" Luke xxiii. 28 — 30.

17. *The great day of his wrath.* — The word day signifies season, or time, and not a day of twenty-four hours. The great time, or season, of his wrath is come. The time of a nation's punishment, by the visitation of God, is called *the day of the Lord*, because at that time God exercises justice on that people; hence, the phrase does not mean one and the same time whenever it occurs, but any time, or times, in which God punished certain nations for their sins by some tremendous visitation of judgment. To illustrate, we refer to several passages of Scripture. See Zeph. i. 12—18. This passage refers to the time of the destruction of the Jews by the Babylonians; and it is called *the day of the Lord*, because God was supposed by the prophet to have sent the armies of Babylon to destroy the nation of the Jews for their sins. It is called, by way of distinction, "that time," "the great day of the Lord," "a day of wrath," "a day of trouble and distress," "a

wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

*day of wasteness and desolation,*" "a *day of darkness and gloominess,*" "a *day of clouds and thick darkness,*" and "the *day of the Lord's wrath,*" &c. Joel describes a punishment which was sent upon the Jews, in very similar language. See chap. ii. 1, 2: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

12—17. We have thus gone through with this chapter, and have illustrated and supported our views of it by many appropriate quotations from the word of God. In order, however, to show that our preconceived theological opinions have not biased us, in the interpretation of the language, we have given the testimony of commentators of acknowledged learning and piety, who have interpreted it in the same manner, and whose opinions on some points were very different from what our own are. But we desire, after all, to add the weight of one more name,—that of a modern author,—standing high in the affections and confidence of the dominant churches of New England; we mean Prof. Stuart. His interpretation of this section is precisely such as we have given, as will be seen by the following quotation: "Nothing is more frequent in the Scripture than the indication of great changes, especially great calamities, by a description of earthquakes, and tempests, and eclipses of the heavenly luminaries, or the mention of their bloody aspect, occasioned by a murky atmosphere. To obtain a full view of this usage, the reader must carefully con-

sult Joel ii. 10, 30, 31; iii. 15; Isa. xiii. 10; xxiv. 23; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Isa. xxxiv. 4; Amos viii. 9; Isa. lix. 9, 10; Jer. xv. 9; Isa. lx. 20. Compare Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24, 25; Luke xxi. 25; Acts ii. 19, 20. In this last passage, and in Joel, from which this is cited, there seems to be merely an indication of great and extraordinary changes; but in all the other passages of like tenor, the careful reader will perceive at once that *calamitous* events are indicated. Every one who knows what disasters the ancients connected with the appearance of eclipses, and of changes in the heavenly bodies, will easily perceive how forcible such language must be, when employed to designate occurrences yet future. An attentive consideration of the passages referred to, will show, moreover, that calamities of every kind, such as are actually brought about by locusts, war, pestilence, famine, &c., are symbolized by such imagery as the text presents. Consequently, unless the context obliges to a different exegesis, (which is not the case here,) we may give to such figurative language a generic sense."—(Com. on the place.)

## CHAPTER VII.

We showed, under the preceding chapter, that the events described therein, were such as were connected with the destruction of Jerusalem; that the *wars, pestilences and famines*, which were to precede the overwhelming calamities of that city, were foretold in said chapter. These events had been previously foretold by our Lord, in the prophecy recorded in the 24th of Matth. But there was one thing mentioned by him in that prophecy, which did not occur in the description we found in the sixth chapter, viz., *the preservation of the Christians during the extermination of the Jewish nation*. This is the subject mentioned in the seventh chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

**A**ND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

which we are now to consider. Other matters connected with the general subject are mentioned in subsequent chapters. Christ's judgment, it should be remembered, consisted of two parts, viz., 1st. To destroy the Jews; and 2d. To save the believing and faithful Christians.

1. *Four angels.*—The description here is altogether scenical. Under chap. v. 2, we have given a classification of the angels mentioned in the Apocalypse; and, by a reference to that, the reader will perceive that the angels mentioned in the verse before us are to be reckoned among the "angels of the elements." The four angels mentioned above are the angels of the four winds; in Rev. xiv. 18, we read of the "angel who had power over fire;" in xvi. 5, mention is made of the "angel of the waters;" the sun also had its angel; xix. 17. "It seems probable (says Prof. Stuart, in his Scriptural Angelology) that the passage Psa. civ. 4, and Heb. i. 7, 'Who maketh his angels the winds, and his ministers a flame of fire,' i. e., lightning, is to be explained in reference to the views of the Jews as connected with the subject of guardian angels over the elements." ¶ *Holding the four winds.*—After the general view of God's judgments which had been taken in the preceding chapter, the revelator descends to particulars; and the first thing represented by him was the great care exercised by infinite wisdom, that the faithful Christians, who were mixed up with the Jews at the beginning of their calamities, were

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,

not to be hurt; that the judgments were not to be let loose until these were distinguished from the rest, and marked, (so to speak,) that when the judgments took place, they might not be harmed. The winds are the agents of destruction. God controls them. He "gathers the wind in his fists;" Prov. xxx. 4. He sends them forth at his pleasure. The winds in the passage before us are emblematical of the judgments of God. These judgments were to be kept back for a short time. Hence John says, he saw four angels, holding the four winds, that they should not blow, to hurt the earth, until the full time had come.

2. *Another angel.*—This was the angel who was supposed to have the custody of the *seal of God*. See the classification before referred to. ¶ *Four angels.*—The same mentioned in the preceding verse. They were commissioned to destroy, but were instructed to withhold for a season. The first angel had the seal of the living God; and he cried unto the four angels, to whom the commission of destruction had been given, to forbear for a short time. ¶ *Ascending from the east.*—How natural, to those who looked on heaven as a locality, (and this the Hebrews did,) to suppose it was situated in the east, the source of light; the place whence the sun, moon, and stars seem to proceed. The angel, with the seal of God, comes as the companion of the heavenly bodies.

3. *Till we have sealed.*—Commence not the final destruction upon the land

till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed :

of Judea, until the servants of God are sealed or marked for preservation. The Christians, who appeared to be in danger of being involved in the general calamities of the Jews, were wonderfully preserved. There is something similar to this in the ancient history of the Jews. When the first-born of the Egyptians were slain, the houses in which the Israelites dwelt were marked for preservation, and the destroying angel passed by them in mercy ; Exod. xii. 21—30. A similar procedure is recorded by Ezekiel, ix. 4 : "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof ;" i. e., set a mark upon the good men, that they may be saved in the time of the general destruction ; see verses 5—11 of same chapter. This is the same figure with the sealing the faithful in the seventh of Revelations. The winds of destruction were not permitted to blow, the work of destruction did not begin, until the faithful were marked for preservation, — "sealed in their foreheads." Notwithstanding every arrangement seemed to be made by the Romans for the vigorous prosecution of the siege of Jerusalem, yet it was for some reason delayed, until the faithful Christians had an opportunity of deliverance. God knew those that were his ; and such were not doomed to destruction. This is another instance of the revelator copying his metaphors from the Old Testament.

4. *An hundred and forty and four thousand.* — The number one hundred and forty-four thousand is of no particular account in the understanding of the passage. By the twelve tribes mentioned in verses 4—8, are intended

and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

the members of spiritual Israel. If we look at the 24th chapter of Matthew, we shall find that the Son of man was to send his angels, with the great sound of a trumpet, and they were to gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other ; Matt. xxiv. 31. These elect were saved from the common destruction ; Idem, 13, 22. The famines, pestilences and earthquakes, were the beginning of sorrows ; Idem, 8. After these things came other dreadful occurrences ; but from the great woes which fell upon the Jews, the faithful Christians were delivered. They were gathered together from all parts, and were wonderfully preserved from the dangers and woes that fell on the rebellious. As to the number of the Jews who were converted to Christianity, we know it not precisely. And as we have said, it makes no difference what it was, for no set number is intended by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, since in prophecy and parables it is very common to put a certain number for an uncertain one. Compared with the bulk of the nation, the Jewish converts to Christianity were a small part, — a remnant, — though it is probable there were many thousands. Besides such as were converted during the personal ministry of Jesus, we know there were three thousand converted in one day under the preaching of Peter ; Acts ii. 41. On a certain occasion, after the conversion of Paul, there was a conversation among the brethren at Jerusalem as to the comparative success of their efforts in converting Jews and Gentiles. Paul "declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." When the brethren heard these things, "they glorified

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed

twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

the Lord, and said unto Paul, Thou seest, brother, how many *thousands* of Jews there are which believe," &c.; Acts xxi. 20. Compared with the whole body of the Jews, the one hundred and forty-four thousand believers, even if there were just so many, would be a small part, or remnant, not above a thirtieth part at the full valuation of them.

5—8. *Of the tribe of Juda, &c.*—We have already given an account of the origin and of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, in our remarks under chapter iv., on the four and twenty elders. The reader is particularly referred to what is there said. The names of Jacob's sons, after whom the tribes were named, were

1 Reuben, the first-born,	7 Dan,
2 Simeon,	8 Gad,
3 Levi,	9 Asher,
4 Judah,	10 Naphthali,
5 Zebulon,	11 Joseph,
6 Issachar,	12 Benjamin.

In the revelator's classification of the tribes, the name of Dan is omitted, and that of Manasses put in its place. This is thought by some to have been done because idolatry broke out in the tribe of Dan; Judges xviii. 18—31; 1 Kings xii. 25—33. Manasseh was a grandson of Jacob, by Joseph; see Gen. xlviii. 5. ¶ *Were sealed twelve thousand.*—There being twelve tribes, this fact gave occasion for the use of the number twelve, which occurs so frequently in the Apocalypse. The Christians being represented by the tribes, and being, in fact, called, metaphorically, "the twelve tribes of Israel," Matt. xix.

28, almost everything appertaining to the New Jerusalem has the mark twelve upon it. There are twelve gates, and twelve angels to guard them; the wall of the city had twelve foundations, on which were engraved the names of the twelve apostles; the wall measured twelve times twelve cubits, &c. &c. See under Rev. xxi. 12, 14. By the use of the number twelve thousand in reference to each tribe, it is not intended to intimate that just so many were taken from each, or even an equal number from each. The certain number mentioned is not to be understood definitely. We have suggested, under ver. 4, that one hundred and forty-four thousand was perhaps somewhat near the number of Jews that had been converted to Christianity at the time the Apocalypse was written; but whether this suggestion is correct or incorrect, is a matter of very small importance in the present case. We regard the twelve thousand converts from each tribe as a mere metaphor to represent those Jews who had been brought to acknowledge the Lamb. The sealing in the forehead, mentioned verses 3 and 4, shows that those who were to be preserved were "the elect," or the Christian converts. To place a name on a man's forehead, in the style of the Apocalypse, was to show what Master he served. Hence we read, "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads;" Rev. xiv. 1. We read, also, that they who dwell in the

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and

tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and

New Jerusalem shall see the Lamb's face, and "*his name shall be in their foreheads*;" xxii. 4. They wore the Lamb's name in the most conspicuous place; they were not ashamed of it. On the same principle the enemies of Jesus are said to "have not the seal of God in their foreheads;" ix. 4. The idolaters or worshippers of the beast are said to have received "a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads;" xiii. 16; xiv. 9; xvii. 5; xx. 4. The sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand in their foreheads is a metaphor to show that they were known, and that they would escape the common destruction, and would be passed over in the general visitation, as the houses of the families of Israel were marked and passed over, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain; Exod. xii. 21—29.

9. *Great multitude, which no man could number.*—The persons mentioned in the preceding verses, and which probably represented the Jewish converts, had been numbered; there were one hundred and forty-four thousand of them. But now we have come to a multitude which no man could number. ¶ *Of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues.*—These represent the Gentile Christians, who were gathered from every nation. See Luke xiii. 29, where we are told they came from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, and sat down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. ¶ *Stood before the throne.*—

They stood before the throne, i. e., they worshipped God and the Lamb. ¶ *Clothed in white robes.*—These were signs of *purity*, and palms in their hands were signs of *victory*. On the white robes, see the notes on Rev. iii. 4, 5, 18; iv. 4; vi. 11. Palm branches were used by victors to denote their conquests. This is the only instance of the use of the metaphor in the Bible. They had been everywhere dispersed; but from all places where they lived, they looked up unto God. They had been persecuted; but they saw deliverance was nigh; for the Jews were the instigators of persecution, not only in Judea, but in all other parts of the world. And during the awful judgments that were visited upon the Jews, the Christians looked with faith and constancy to Christ.

10. *And cried with a loud voice, saying, &c.*—They praised God and the Lamb for deliverance from oppression. The doxology in this case bears a striking resemblance to that in Rev. v. 13. The scene is represented as being in heaven; and there is a climax of praise very similar to that which occurs in the chapter last mentioned. There the cause of the praise was the fact that the Lamb had prevailed to open the sealed book; here it is the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand for preservation, that fills all heaven with joy. It is imaginary; but it is beautiful.

11. *All the angels round about the throne.*—See v. 11. The rhetorical form is almost precisely the same in

about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

both cases. It is a grand conception of the revelator's imagination.

12. *Blessing and glory, &c.* — Under chapters iv. and v., we showed that the revelator gave a representation of the dwelling-place of the Most High. The verses before us seem to refer back to that representation, and show us all heaven worshipping God, and praising Him for his judgments, acquiescing in them, and blessing and glorifying God, and ascribing to him wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, forever and ever. A doxology similar to this is found in Rev. xix. 1—4: "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

13. *One of the elders.* — One of the four and twenty elders mentioned in Rev. iv. 4, 10. He is represented as asking the questions, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" in order to give an opportunity to say what follows. The inquiry is made concerning those who were mentioned, ver. 9, who were clothed with white robes, and who had palms in their hands.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have

What are they? what body of men? what does their white dress purport? and whence came they? The elder himself is represented as knowing who they were, for he immediately described them.

14. *Came out of great tribulation.* — Jesus told his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" John xvi. 33. Paul had to endure great tribulation, and he bore testimony "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God;" Acts xiv. 22. But the Christians were patient in tribulation; Rom. xii. 12; Christ comforted them in it; 2 Cor. i. 4; they were exceedingly joyful in it; 2 Cor. vii. 4; knowing that it could not separate them from the love of Christ; Rom. viii. 35. When their enemies, the Jews, were destroyed, they (the Christians) were represented as coming out of great tribulation. ¶ *Blood of the Lamb.* — See the notes on Rev. i. 5; v. 9; and xij. 11. They had washed their robes and made them clean; and that this washing represents Christian sanctification, is evident, for the robes were said to have been washed in "the blood of the Lamb." The blood of Jesus is made an emblem of his doctrine, which he sealed with his blood. In the outward, literal sense, the blood of Jesus can cleanse nothing. His flesh and blood represent his doctrine; John vi. 63. It is his word, his doctrine, that washes away sin. "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged;" Prov. xvi. 6. The church was cleansed by the "washing of water by the word;" Eph. v. 26

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve

him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;

This was "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Titus iii. 5.

15. *Before the throne of God.* — In what sense were they "before the throne of God?" They had an habitual sense of his presence; they lived near to him; they acknowledged his divine government; they praised and glorified his name; they rendered him willing obedience. Thus were they before the throne of God. ¶ *Served him day and night in his temple.* — They were, by metaphor, represented as kings and priests unto God; Rev. i. 6; v. 10; and of course it may be said they served him, like the priests of old, day and night, i. e., continually, in his temple. Not in the outward temple upon Mount Zion, but in the inward, spiritual temple, of which the edifice on Zion was the representative. In the New Jerusalem, there is no need of any outward temple. John "saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" Rev. xxi. 22. It was a spiritual temple. There is now a temple to God wherever the saints assemble to worship. When Jacob had his vision of the Almighty, he awoke and said, "This is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven;" Gen. xxviii. 17. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" said Paul to his brethren; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16. They served God in the spirit continually; the allusion to the temple is merely metaphorical. ¶ *Shall dwell among them.* — If men are said in the spiritual sense to be the temple of God, He may be said to dwell among them. In this sense God "dwells among men," in their hearts, by the power of his truth and love; Rev. xxi. 3. All this may be

enjoyed by the believer here on the earth. God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," but in the spiritual temple of the heart. He dwelt in Jesus and in his disciples; yea, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him. "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us;" 1 John iii. 24. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," for "God is love;" 1 John iv. 8, 12, 15, 16. Such is the sense in which God dwells among his saints.

16. *They shall hunger no more.* — Hunger and thirst are put for the need which the soul hath of divine truth. The figures here are the most beautiful that the mind can conceive. Divine truth is to the soul what nourishment is to the body. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" Matt. iv. 4. Sublime truth! Jesus was the living bread. Whoso eateth that bread hath eternal life; John vi. 58. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst;" Idem, 35. His doctrine was also represented as the "water of life." "Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him (said Jesus) shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" John iv. 14. Hence it is said of believers, who dwell in God's spiritual temple, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." ¶ *Neither shall the sun light on them* — The meaning is, they shall be relieved of all distress. One species of human distress is hunger, the redeemed shall hunger no more.

neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall

Another kind of distress, perhaps more poignant, is thirst; the redeemed shall thirst no more. Men frequently suffer when on deserts, or wrecks of ships, not only from hunger and thirst, but also from the scorching rays of the sun; but the redeemed are safe,—the sun shall not light on them. The description is evidently taken from Isaiah xlix. 10: "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." The blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are represented sometimes by the prophets under the metaphor of a tent or shadow, that screens men from the extreme heat of the sun; Isaiah iv. 6; xxv. 4; xxxii. 2.

17. *Lamb in the midst of the throne.*—This is agreeable to the description in Rev. v. 3. ¶ *Shall feed them.*—This is the reason they shall hunger no more; ver. 16. Jesus, the Lamb of God, in this case assumes the character of a shepherd; and his church are his flock. He feeds them, as the shepherd feeds his flock. False teachers are compared to shepherds who feed not their flocks. See Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 10. Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep;" John xxi. 15, 16; i. e., nourish the flock. John had the authority of his Master, then, for the metaphor. St. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;" Acts xx. 28. And Peter gives the same advice to the elders of the church, 1. Epis. v. 2. ¶ *Shall lead them by living fountains.*—Here the metaphor

feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

of the shepherd is still kept up. How much like the language of the 23d Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters;" ver. 1, 2. The tenderest care which the shepherd can bestow upon his flock is here used to represent the care which Jesus had for his faithful followers. The goodness of God "is a fountain of living waters;" Jer. ii. 13. Refreshing his people on the knowledge of divine love, Jesus indeed leads them "unto living fountains of water." In Rev. xxi. 6 it is said, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." ¶ *Wipe away all tears from their eyes.*—This heightens the description, which had been truly beautiful without it. To wipe away tears is put for the removal of all causes of sorrow. The gospel is said to wipe all tears away; Isa. xxv. 8; Rev. xxi. 4. This passage in the 7th chapter, 13—17, is one of the most beautiful in the whole book.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1. *And when he had opened the seventh seal.*—We now come to the opening of the *seventh* seal, or roll, (sealed book,) of which we found a description in chap. v. 1—7. The opening of six of these seals has been described in chap. vi. In the 8th chapter we have a more particular description of the woes that were to fall upon the Jews previously to the approach of the Roman armies. The approach of these armies is mentioned in chapter ix. The opening of the first seal is described chap. vi., verse 1; of the second, verse 3; of the third, verse 5; of the fourth, verse 7; of the fifth, verse 9; and of the sixth, verse 12. The famines, the pesti-

## CHAPTER VIII.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was

ences, and the earthquakes, mentioned chap. vi., were "the beginning of sorrows;" Matt. xxiv. 7, 8; and therefore are put down first in the order of the Apocalypse. Then comes the persecution and killing of the Christians, or martyrs; Matt. xxiv. 9—12; and hence the crying of the martyrs for vengeance is placed next in the Apocalypse; vi. 9—11. Next in order in 24th of Matthew, comes a premonition of the "abomination of desolation," verse 15, which is described under the sixth seal in the Apocalypse, 12—17. Jesus then states that the Christians were to be saved from these calamities, Matt. xxiv. 16—21, which is beautifully described in the Apocalypse by the sealing of the 144,000, chap. vii. For the sake of the elect, or the believers, the days of tribulation at first were shortened, or remitted; the siege was raised for a short time, Matt. xxiv. 22; and thus the Christians escaped; which is represented in the Apocalypse by the angels holding back the winds from blowing on the earth, to destroy it, until the 144,000 of spiritual Israel were sealed; vii. 1—3. Thus we find that so far as the destruction of Jerusalem is concerned, the order of Christ in describing the events in his prophecy, in Matt. xxiv., is principally followed by the revelator in his seven seals. The events placed by our Lord as happening *immediately* before the fall of the city, are described in the following words:—"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not:"

silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels

Matt. xxiv. 23—26. These are the events which are described in bold and glowing metaphors in the 8th chapter of Revelation, under the opening of the seventh seal, which is subdivided into seven parts. ¶ *Silence in heaven.*—The metaphors are still based on the plan of the services in the temple. We behold, in verse 3, that the angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer. This was preparatory to offering incense in the holy place. The people stood without, i. e., without the sacred place, in some other part of the temple, every one in secret, silent prayer the meanwhile. The Lord was supposed to be in the temple, in a special manner, at the time of incense. Hence it is said, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him;" Hab. ii. 20. The same service is more definitely referred to, Luke i. 9—10: "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense." The prayer was secret, in each one's soul, and *silence* of course prevailed. When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, and preparation was made for burning incense, there was said to be, in conformity to the temple service, "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour," which was probably about the length of time that was consumed in this part of the temple service.

2. *Seven angels which stood before God.*—These are those we call the angels of the divine presence, because they always stand before God, like the seven confidential ministers, nearest the throne of the earthly monarch. See Tobit xii. 18. See, also, the notes on the angelology of the Apocalypse under v. 2, and the notes on i. 4, iii. 1, iv. 5. The events

which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

under the seventh seal are divided into seven parts ; and hence seven trumpets, with which to announce those events, are placed in the hands of the seven angels. The whole, of course, is scenical.

3. *Another angel.* — This was the angel of the golden censer. — *Angiology*, Apoc., § 9. ¶ *At the altar.* — The altar here spoken of was unquestionably the altar of incense, as incense was about to be offered. It is mentioned Exod. xxx. 27. ¶ *Golden censer.* — The golden censer was for the purpose of incense. The sacred vessels were many of them of gold and silver, and hence were for their value carried off into Babylon, at the captivity, and afterwards restored ; Ezra vi. 5, and Dan. v. 2, 3. The censer was of pure gold ; 1 Kings vii. 50 ; 2 Chron. iv. 22 ; Heb. ix. 4. ¶ *Given unto him much incense.* — To the angel was given much incense, the occasion being an extraordinary one. ¶ *That he should offer it.* — This he was to offer while the people were in silent prayer. He offered it during the prayers — during the half hour's silence. We have already shown, on chapter v. 8, that the odors were the prayers of saints. "Let my prayer be set before thee as incense ;" Psa. cxli. 2. The Jews gave themselves much to prayer, as did also the Christians ; Acts vi. 4. The Jewish Christians were directed specially to pray during the calamities of the nation ; Matt. xxiv. 20. In fact, the believers everywhere were directed to pray in reference to that event. See 1 Peter

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth ; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings,

iv. 7 : "The end of all things is at hand [referring unquestionably to the destruction of Jerusalem] : be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

4. *Ascended up before God.* — At that time, especially, therefore, the prayers of Christians everywhere ascended to heaven, denoted by the words, "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand."

5. *Filled it with fire.* — The facts mentioned in the verse are preparatory to what is to follow, — a sort of metaphorical introduction to the threatened judgments. Fire was always burning on the altar ; Lev. xvi. 12 ; Isa. vi. 6. It is used to signify not only the judgments which God sends upon the earth, but the purifying power of God, and oftentimes the purifying power of his judgments. It is put for the judgments of God in the verse before us. The angel filled the censer with fire from the altar, and cast it on the earth, or land of Judea, to show that further judgments were to fall on the Jews. A great commotion followed. "There were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake ;" a figure of tumults, anger, great noises, frightful visitations from heaven, and a great overthrow. We think the figure of taking fire from the altar to cast upon the earth is designed to show that the judgments originated in heaven ; and are sent out from the presence of God. So the desolation of Israel was

and an earthquake

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they

described by Ezek. ix. and x. Observe carefully x. 1, 2.

6. *Prepared themselves to sound.* — No further delay is to be expected. All is now ready for the commencement of final action. The woes were about to come; they were just on the point of commencing; and hence it is said, the angels prepared themselves to sound.

7. *Hail and fire mingled with blood.* — The figure here signified destruction. What could be more expressive of devastation, with loss of life added thereto, than "hail and fire mingled with blood?" The figure is borrowed from the Old Testament. One of the judgments upon Egypt was thunder, hail and fire; Exod. ix. 21—25. The figures of hail and fire for judgments originated here. See, also, Ezek. xxxviii. 22: "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." ¶ *Third part of trees.*

— The *third part* of trees being burnt signified that this was as yet but a *partial* destruction. This is not the treading of the holy city under foot. That was to be done by the Roman armies; and we have not yet come to that part of the Apocalypse in which the approach of the Roman armies is described. In our judgment, what follows in the chapter before us refers to the tumults among the Jews themselves, which broke out in different places, some in the country, some on the coast, near the sea, and some in the holy city, endangering the very city itself, which was threatened to be destroyed by the quarrels of dif-

were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was

ferent portions of the Jews, without the aid of the Roman armies. The destruction being described by burning, or overthrow of the forests and herbage, or grass, is drawn also, we think, from the account of the plague of hail in Egypt, Exod. ix. 22, 25.

8. *The second angel sounded.* — This opens another series of calamities, — another source of woe. ¶ *A great mountain burning with fire.* — High mountains and lofty hills denoted kingdoms, republics, states, cities, and proud men that exalt themselves. See how Isaiah describes the fall of the proud and lofty: "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up;" ii. 12—14. Here it is manifest, that by the high mountains and hills were intended those that were proud and lofty. ¶ *Cast into the sea.* — The figure of throwing down a burning mountain is borrowed from Jer. li. 25: "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain." See Ezek. xxxviii. 14—23, where the reader will find a train of metaphors very similar to those which occur in the chapter before us. See, also, Amos vii. 4, and Rev. xvi. 3. The burning mountain may well have represented some proud, ambitious, influential and seditious person, claiming to be a

cast into the sea : and the third part of the sea became blood.

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

Christ, or a prophet, leading multitudes astray, and causing their destruction. He falls in the midst of a blaze of divine judgments. What would more fitly represent *such* an individual, than "a great mountain burning with fire?" and what would more fitly represent his fall, in answer to the faith and prayers of the Christians, than the fall of the mountain into the sea? Jesus told his followers, if they had faith, "ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; *it shall be done*;" Matt. xxi. 21. Does not the reader see, that the judgments coming on the Jews, being represented by a mountain removed from its base, agrees precisely with the metaphorical language of the sixth chapter, which, in point of subject, is the predecessor of this : "And every mountain and island were moved out of their places;" 14. There is a congruity in the metaphors through this whole connection.

9. *Third part of the creatures.*—The judgment was yet a partial one, preliminary to the great and final overthrow of the nation. See Exod. vii. 19—21 for an account of the events which probably gave rise to these metaphors.

10. *The third angel sounded.*—We now proceed to another woe described in the highly metaphorical language of the revelator. ¶ *There fell a great star.*—How well comports this with vi. 13. "And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." This metaphor also is borrowed from the prophets. Stars are sometimes used to represent good men, and sometimes bad men. It is quite possible, the

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ;

reader may think, it would have been much better, if the writer of the Apocalypse had seen fit to use plain language, which would have been more easily understood. We reply, this style of writing has a very different appearance to us from that which it presented to the people to whom it was addressed. They were used to it ; and instruction could well be conveyed *to them* by such means. Our object is not to find fault with the style of the Apocalypse, but to explain it, according to the best of our means and ability, by the help of other parts of the word of God. Stars, we said, are sometimes used to represent *good* men and sometimes *bad*. At one time the star signifies a *conqueror* ; Numb. xxiv. 17 : "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." At another it signifies the rulers of the church ; Rev. i. 20, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Wicked apostates are said to be "wandering stars," that go from light into outer darkness. The fall of the King of Babylon was represented as the fall of a star from heaven. The figure is very striking. He was proud and aspiring : he exalted himself greatly, even "above the stars of God ;" he said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,—I will be like the Most High." But he was brought down to destruction ; and after his debasement it was said to him, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! [or morning star] how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations ;" Isa. xiv 12. The fall of the *star*

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened,

mentioned in Rev. viii. 10, 11, may well represent the overthrow of some leader, some false Christ, some principal one among the seditious, or the zealots, who led his followers into bitter suffering and death. The Jews were the prey of the ambition of such unprincipled men, and had been for some time before. See Acts xxi. 38: "Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?" ¶ *Third part of the rivers.* — The destruction is a partial one, preliminary (as we have before said) to the great and final overthrow of the nation. Our Saviour assured his followers that previous to the great event, false Christs should arise, and lead the people astray. They should "show great signs and wonders;" Matt. xxiv. 24; they should be greatly lifted up; and if the fall of bad rulers and wicked men from eminent places was represented in prophetic style by the fall of stars, [as it surely was,] why may not the fall of some leader, among these false Christs, be represented by the fall of a star from heaven? But the judgment as yet was only partial.

11. *Name of the star is called Wormwood.* — The star of which we are speaking, was called "Wormwood," to show its effect. It brought the deepest bitterness of anguish upon the people when it fell. Perhaps the figure of bitterness was originally drawn from Exod. xv. 23, 24. Idolatry was a root of bitterness or wormwood to the Jews, and brought upon them severe judgments. See Deut. xxix. 18. In describing to young men the lips of the strange woman, Solomon says, they "drop as a honey-

comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword;" Prov. v. 3, 4. God threatened the Jews, before he sent his judgments upon them, "I will feed this people with *wormwood*, and give them water of gall to drink;" Jer. ix. 15; xxiii. 15. How appropriate then, in an address to the Asiatic churches, to describe the overthrow of a leader, who was to involve many others in his fate, as the fall of a star, whose name was Wormwood. Wise men early learned to give names to stars; in fact, God himself is said, in the style of the ancients, "to call them all by their names;" Psa. cxlvii. 4; Isa. xl. 26.

12. *Third part of the sun.* — Under the sounding of the fourth angel, the woes seem to be still more tremendous and alarming. It is not now the destruction in part of the trees, or the grass, or the fountains of water; but greater far than that,—it is the destruction of the third part of the sun, the moon and the stars. These stand for the highest earthly dignities, and the most glorious places. What, then, may this represent more fitly than the tumults in the very city, and in the temple,—the holy place; which we know were carried on there before and during the siege by the Roman armies? It had been represented, in the preceding chapter, that "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth;" verses 12, 13; which we interpreted to signify great civil and political changes. In the verse before us, as we have said, it is the *third part* of the sun, moon and stars that are smitten. Without,

and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a

therefore, being presumptive in the application, we think it perfectly safe to say, that this denotes, not the full destruction of the high powers of the Jewish state, but commotions among them, so that their power was partly stricken down, and they were thereby more easily made the prey of their enemies without the city. We shall have occasion to show, before we close our examination of the part of the Apocalypse which relates to the Jews, that, so far as human judgment can decide, had it not been for the contentions among the Jewish leaders, both in church and state, their city never could have been overthrown.

13. *Angel flying through the midst of heaven.*—The term angel is applied, in the Bible, to any being, or thing, sent out of God for a special purpose. To fly in the midst of heaven, may signify flying in the air, between heaven and earth, or it may signify moving about among the powers of heaven, which had been mentioned in the preceding verse.

¶ *"Saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe."*—The figure of the angel, in this case, may have been introduced merely to announce that three woes remained to be fulfilled; or possibly it may have reference to a singular Jewish personage, who appeared in Jerusalem, in the midst of the greatest tumult, a description of whom we take from Josephus. What that historian reckoned the most horrible of all, was one Jesus, an ordinary fellow, who came to the feast of tabernacles, and ran crying up and down the street day and night, "*A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against all the people.*" The magis-

trates endeavored by stripes and torture to restrain him; but he still cried with a mournful voice, "*Woe, woe to Jerusalem!*" This he continued to do for seven years and five months together, and especially at the great festivals; and he neither grew hoarse, nor was tired; but went about the walls and cried with a loud voice, "*Woe, woe to the city and to the temple;*" and as he added at last, "*Woe, woe also to myself,*" it happened that a stone from some sling or engine immediately struck him dead. Let it be observed, that the woes denounced by him were not those which had happened under the first four trumpets, but those which were to happen under the last three. "*Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.*" Notwithstanding, however, the close similarity between the angel and this personage in Jerusalem, it is by no means certain he was referred to by the revelator. In the scenery of the chapter, the angel may have been introduced merely to show that three out of the seven woes remained to be fulfilled. This will introduce us to the THREE WOE TRUMPETS.

## CHAPTER IX.

1. *And the fifth angel sounded.*—Of the seven angels who were to sound their trumpets, as described in the seventh seal, viii. 3, the sounding of *four* has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. Three more woes remain, as mentioned in the last verse of that chapter, — "*Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.*" We have hitherto followed

## CHAPTER IX.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from

the order of events as described by the Saviour in the 24th of Matthew, and to that we shall still adhere; for it seems that in describing the woes that fell upon the Jews, the revelator made that order of events the groundwork of his description. In the 8th chapter, we found a description, couched in the highly metaphorical language of that book, of the intestinal divisions and tumults of the Jews; and of the fall of the leaders in these rebellious and sectional uprisings. For the Saviour's premonition of those events, see Matt. xxiv. 23—28. Let us now quote the next section of the Saviour's prophecy:—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;" Matt. xxiv. 29, 30. Observe, these events happened *immediately* after the appearance of the false Christs and leaders, who broke the Jewish nation into factions and led them astray. This weakened their power, which was represented by the smiting of a third part of the sun, moon and stars. But the great calamity is about to come. The sun and the moon shall be totally darkened; the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. ¶ *I saw a star fall.*—A star fell from heaven, or, as Dr. A. Clarke says, "An angel, encompassed with light, suddenly descended; and seemed like a star falling from heaven." We think this the idea to be conveyed;

heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottom-

for, 1st. This is not the star "Wormwood," of which we treated in the commentary on the preceding chapter. No name is given to this star; it is a pure orb of light. 2d. It had a commission from above; "to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." Who gave the angel, or star, that key? See Rev. i. 18: "I am he that liveth and was dead [Jesus,] and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." It is "he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;" Rev. iii. 7. He gave the key to the angel who descended from heaven. 3d. This seems to be the same angel mentioned Rev. xx. 1: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand." As the giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter signified giving him authority to bind and loose, (Matt. xvi. 19,) so the giving the key of the bottomless pit to the angel, signified giving him power to let loose the hordes confined there.

2. *Bottomless pit.*—This is solely an Apocalyptic expression, and occurs Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8; xx. 1, 3. What strange ideas have filled the minds of Christians concerning this pit. And after all, we are obliged to say that the original phrase does not warrant the translation *bottomless pit*. The true signification is, *the well of the abyss*, or deep within a deep. It is an intensive expression to represent the deepest abyss,—a hyperbole, like that of Milton,

"And in the lowest depth, a lower deep,  
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide."

But it is only in *two* cases (Rev. ix. 1, 2) out of the *seven* mentioned above, that there is even the slightest ground

less pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a

great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason

for pretence that the word *bottomless* is a just translation; for in the other *five* cases the word *abussos* (abyss) stands by itself, without any attempt to increase its force; and in these cases the word *abyss* would convey the exact meaning of the original word. When we read (Luke viii. 31) that the demons besought our Lord "that he would not command them to go *out into the deep*," it might as well have been translated *bottomless pit* here as in the Apocalypse, for it is precisely the same word in the Greek. And yet who does not know that by "the deep," in that place, was meant the sea of Galilee, on the shores of which the transaction occurred? The phrase abyss, or depth of the abyss, in the case before us, is purely metaphorical. When it is said (Rev. xiii. 1) that a beast rose up out of *the sea*, it means precisely the same as in Rev. xi. 7, "the beast ascendeth out of the bottomless pit." As all blessings, in the view of the Jews, came down from above, so scourges, although under the wise direction of God, were supposed to come up from beneath. In the former case God is said to "open the windows of heaven;" Mal. iii. 10; in the latter, to unlock the depth of the abyss, or the bottomless pit. This is all, we are confident, that the expression means. The word *pit* is often used metaphorically in the Scriptures. To be abased, to be cut off, to be destroyed, is to go down into the pit; Job xxxiii. 18, 24, 28, 30; Psal. ix. 15; xxviii. 1; xxxv. 7; xl. 2; cxix. 85; cxl. 10; Prov. xxviii. 10; Isa. xiv. 16—23. The latter passage specially will show, that by pit, in the metaphorical sense, is meant a low state, beneath the common state of man. To come up out of the pit, was to come up from beneath. Jesus was from *above*; his enemies, the Jews, were from *beneath*; John viii. 23. Opening the bottomless pit was noth-

ing more than giving men permission to come up from beneath, from a low estate, from among the commonality, from the multitude, which is frequently represented by the sea; and an angry multitude by the waves of the sea. "Open to me the gates of righteousness;" Psal. cxviii. 19. To open the doors of heaven, is to cause the rain to descend; lxxviii. 23; Ezek. xxxvii. 12; Zech. xi. 1; Mal. iii. 10; Acts xiv. 27. To open the bottomless pit, then, was to give the hosts permission to come upon Judea. Being looked upon as scourges, they were said to come from beneath. There is no word in the English language that so well conveys the sense of the Greek word as *abyss*. ¶ *Smoke out of the pit*.—This is but a part of the scenery to represent the gloom that was to spread itself over the land, when the hosts of the enemy issued, as it were, out of the abyss, to overrun Judea. ¶ *Sun and the air were darkened*.—In further carrying out the metaphor, smoke is said to arise out of the abyss, like the smoke of a great furnace, "and *the sun and the air were darkened* by reason of the smoke of the pit." How closely does this resemble the language of Jesus, already quoted, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the *sun be darkened*," &c.; Matt. xxiv. 29. And how exactly does this agree with the description of the prophet Joel: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of *darkness* and of *gloominess*, a day of *clouds* and of *thick darkness*, as the morning [fogs or vapors which prevail before the sun rises] spread upon the mountains;" Joel ii. 1, 2. With such guides we feel a strong confidence in referring the chapter before us to the events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. There

of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which

seems to be the same general strain of metaphor both in the prophets and in the prophecy of our Lord, in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem. The revelator follows them; but is more metaphorical than either. No reader, however, can fail to see the similarity in their style.

3. *Came out of the smoke locusts.*—And what do these locusts represent but the first approach of the Roman army? "Locusts," (says Dr. Lancaster, in his abridgment of Daubuz,) "fly in such prodigious numbers, as that they form a great cloud and darken the sky; and then falling upon the earth, make a most terrible havoc of all the fruits thereof; and so are a proper symbol to signify AN ARMY of enemies coming in vast multitudes," &c. &c. — (Quoted in Tower's Illustrations of Prophecy.) But that they did signify *an army* will be rendered absolutely certain as we proceed. They had more than a locust's power; they had the power of scorpions.

4. *Should not hurt the grass.*—If they had been locusts in reality, what would have been more natural than that they should have devoured the grass, and any green thing? But they were symbolical; they represented an army of men, who were to make havoc of their fellow-men. Those servants of God, however, who were sealed in their foreheads, Rev. vii 3, they could not harm; they had power only to hurt those who had not the seal.

have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not

5. *Should not kill them.*—This language is not to be understood too strictly, for undoubtedly some were slain by the Roman armies at their first approach. Nevertheless, this was not the time when the great slaughter took place. ¶ *Tormented five months.*—They were, however, greatly tormented, and were driven to the greatest straits for the want of the necessities of life, and for the dangers caused by their animosities among themselves, and the threatening of the Roman armies. ¶ *Torment of a scorpion.*—Thus was their torment, "as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man." Josephus states that very few of the Jews were slain during the invasion of their cities by Cestius Gallus, although they suffered much. — [*De Bell. Jud.*, Book II., chap. xx., sec. 9.] Cestius lay before Jerusalem one whole summer, says Adam Clarke, or about five months; and this may be the time referred to by the words, "they should be tormented five months;" verses 5, 10.

6. *Shall men seek death.*—This was owing to the greatness of their sufferings, arising from their commotions within and enemies without. Christ and his apostles forewarned men of the "great tribulation;" and we have no doubt that many longed for death as a relief from their terrible sufferings. It is not uncommon for people to suffer so severely as to long for death. Job spoke of those in his day, who "longed for death, but it came

find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the

hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were

not, and dug for it more than for hidden treasures;" iii. 21. And Jeremiah, foretelling the sufferings of the Jews, said, "Death shall be chosen rather than life;" viii. 3.

7. *Horses prepared for battle.*—Now we have what we call certain proof, that by the locusts is signified *armies*. They were "like horses prepared unto battle." ¶ *Crowns like gold.*—Their brazen caps "were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men."

8. *As the hair of women.*—Their hair, or some ornament of their caps, was as the hair of women; and their teeth were like lions' teeth.

9. *Breast-plates of iron.*—They had breast-plates also, which is surely descriptive of soldiers. ¶ *Sound of their wings.*—The sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots and many horses running to battle. How exactly this agrees with the description given of the invasion of Jerusalem by the prophet Joel. It seems impossible to avoid the impression, that the revelator drew his figures from that prophet. "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle-array;" Joel ii. 3—5. There

can be no doubt that the prophet and revelator spake of the same event. What other interpretation can be given of the chapter now before us, that presents such claims to belief? Every one must see the very striking resemblance between the description of Joel and that of the revelator; in fact, they are almost the self-same thing. Why then ought we not to be guided by the prophet in applying the dark passages of the Apocalypse? The description is evidently that of an army well supplied with cavalry; and for that species of force the Romans were eminent.

10. *They had tails like unto scorpions.*—The meaning is, they had a scorpion's power to inflict pain. It agrees precisely with what is said verse 3, "Unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power." The scorpion is the largest and most malignant of all the insect tribe. Its bite is terrible, not so much for the death it sometimes occasions, as for the pain it causes, which is worse than death. The torment of the bite of the scorpion of the east is thus described, according to Mr. Taylor, by Dioscorides: "When the scorpion has stung, the place becomes inflamed and hardened; it reddens by tension, and is painful by intervals, being now chilly, now burning. The pain soon rises high, and rages sometimes more, and sometimes less. A sweating succeeds, attended by a shivering and trembling; the extremities of the body become cold; the groin swells; the hair stands on end; the members become pale; and the

stings in their tails ; and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his

skin feels throughout it the sensation of a perpetual prickling, as if by needles." Such is "the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man;" ver. 5. When men are in this awful condition, they long for death, and death seems to flee away from them only to protract their torments. In order to give the fact, that the Roman armies would cause the most intense anguish on the unbelieving Jews, it is said that the locusts, which represented those armies, had tails like scorpions, armed with stings. ¶ *Hurt men five months.*—The locust season lasted about five months; the animal comes, ravages, and passes away in about that time. It is also said, that Cestius Gallus lay before Jerusalem about that time. See on ver. 5.

11. *They had a king.*—This was necessary to be said, because locusts in general have no king. See Prov. xxx. 27: "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." The revelator was obliged, therefore, to add, that the forces of which he spoke, under the metaphor of locusts, *had* a king, or commander. The movements of armies were described by the prophets by the progress of locusts. "As the running to and fro of locusts, shall he run upon them;" Isa. xxxiii. 4. Locusts represent especially *large* armies. "Make thyself many as the locusts." \* \* \* "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers;" Nahum iii. 15, 17. ¶ *The angel of the bottomless pit.*—As the host was said to ascend out of the pit or abyss, so

name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

their commander was said to be the angel of that abyss, the principal personage. And as he caused great loss and devastation, his name is *DESTRUCTION*, for such is the meaning of the Hebrew word *Abaddon*, and the Greek *Apollyon* signifies a *Destroyer*. Pickering defines *Abaddon*, destruction, devastation, destroyer; *Apollyon*, the destroyer, devastation. Donnegan defines the verb *Apollumi*, to destroy utterly, and he says Homer uses it mostly of persons *slain in battle*. Liddell and Scott say that *Apollumi* signifies to destroy utterly, kill, slay, murder; and they refer to Homer, who used it to signify death *in battle*; and when applied to things, he used it to mean to demolish, to lay waste. How appropriate, then, according to these high authorities, to term the commander of a destroying army, *Abaddon*, or *Apollyon*.

12. *One woe is past.*—One of the three woes mentioned viii. 13, has now been described. Two more remain. Let us turn our attention to the next woe. The three woes were to come at the sounding of the fifth, sixth, and seventh angels. The first woe we have noticed under the sounding of the fifth angel, ix. 1, and now we come to the sounding of the sixth angel.

13. *Heard a voice.*—The object of the revelator here is to introduce the loosing of the four angels at the Euphrates; and it is perfectly consistent with the style of the Apocalypse to describe such an event as being done by divine command. Hence, the voice from the four horns of the golden altar, or the voice of God.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were

14. *Loose the four angels, &c.*—The command is to loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. The *great* river. The Euphrates is a *great* river, and was more especially so in the estimation of the ancients. Its banks were the seat of many noble cities; and towering above all in importance was Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." The Euphrates, or the region thereof, was the eastern boundary of the Roman empire, and that river flowed through a vast extent of populous country. Being far removed from the capital of the empire, and the nations bordering upon it being hard to govern, it was expedient to keep armies there, under experienced generals. The first efforts of the Romans to obtain possession of Jerusalem having failed, it became necessary for them to draw their forces together. Dr. Hammond says, "It is said by Josephus, (lib. 5, ch. 6,) that the Syrian legions of the Roman army lay as far as Euphrates; and Philo in his Embassy mentions the armies reaching to Euphrates." What, then, does the loosing of the four angels bound in the great river signify, but a call upon the Roman commanders in that region, who had been detained there by previous orders, to repair to Jerusalem with their forces? Vespasian may perhaps be regarded as one of those angels, for he was a leader of the Syrian army, and repaired to Jerusalem after the former leader, Cestius Gallus, had failed to subdue the rebellious Jews. It was by this army that he was nominated as emperor, at which he repaired to Rome, and was succeeded by Titus, his elder son, who prosecuted the war in Judea. This, then, is what is

loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the

meant by the loosing of the angels in the Euphrates, viz., the calling the Roman commanders, who were encamped in different provinces in the vicinity of that river, to bring their forces to the city. In the interim between the withdrawal of Cestius and the approach of Vespasian, the Christians had an opportunity to escape from the ill-fated city; and in this way the 144,000 who had been sealed in their foreheads fled away, and were saved; Rev. vii. 3, 4. This all transpired before the temple was destroyed, because the voice that commanded to loose the four angels came from the golden altar, which could not with propriety have been said after the temple and the altar were demolished.

15. *An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.*—That is, they were prepared and ready at all times for any length of service; they were instant in season and out of season; they were ready at any warning for the work of destruction. They were to take part in the destruction of the Jews, and do their share in slaying that misguided people.

16. *Two hundred thousand thousand.*—This is a certain number for an uncertain. It was a custom of the ancients, and is still retained by the moderns, to express an uncertain number by a certain one. The demons were called *legion*, not because the exact number of them was known, but because they were many. We might say of a vast host, "there was a million of them," without intending that exact number. So when it is said, the number of the horsemen were "two hundred thousand thousand," or two hundred millions, the only idea intended to be conveyed was that there were a large number

army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions;

The expression is surely hyperbolical. The Roman armies assembled around Jerusalem were very numerous.

17. *And thus I saw.*—That is, I am now about to describe more particularly the appearance of the horses and the horsemen, which I have mentioned as passing before me in my vision. ¶ *Breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone.*—It is but a matter of small importance to settle, whether these breast-plates were worn by the horses or the riders. They were of fire, jacinth and brimstone; i. e., they were in appearance like these articles. A breast-plate very highly polished, and reflecting brilliantly the rays of the sun, or of the camp fires, would seem like a breast-plate of fire. The jacinth was a precious stone; it is mentioned, Rev. xxi. 20, as one of the garnitures of the foundation of the New Jerusalem. Some of the breast-plates looked like a brilliant of this description; and others had the appearance of brimstone, i. e., (we think,) burning brimstone. ¶ *As the heads of lions.*—They were fierce, fearless; their manes were like lions' manes; they had the appearance of great majesty and strength. The best horses are trained to war; and the nations around the Euphrates, from whom this cavalry came, abounded in the best of horses. ¶ *Fire, and smoke, and brimstone.*—This is purely the work of the revelator's imagination. Out of the mouth, or nostrils,—for the breath may proceed from either; and in a hard chase, or in great excitement, the horse breathes through his mouth.

and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for

When highly excited, he drives his breath with great force through his nostrils, and we say he snorts. By this noise, he is sometimes described as being heard at a distance. "The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones: for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein;" Jer. viii. 16. The horses which John saw breathed fire and smoke from burning brimstone. It is customary in our day, in a painting of the excited horse, to show him with head uplifted, ears put forward, eyes all kindled with animation, and phosphorescence at his nostrils. So saith Job: "The glory of his nostrils is terrible;" xxxix. 20. To give the horses of the eastern cavalry the appearance of great animation, fierceness and power of destruction, the revelator describes them as breathing out flames, like the flames that proceed from burning brimstone.

18. *By these three.*—That is, "by the fire, by the smoke, and by the brimstone." The power described by them is meant. By this power did the cavalry its part in the work of destruction.

19. *In their mouth and in their tails.*—Here lay their power, to which we have referred under the preceding verse. The revelator's object is still the same, viz., to represent the cavalry to be as fearful as possible. In his picture, the horses breathed fire and smoke and brimstone. So much for the mouths. He still wished to

their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the

heighten the description, and hence said, "For their power is in their mouth and in their tails;" i. e., in the latter as well as the former. He says no more about their mouths, but proceeds, "their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt." Such is the picture. They had not such tails as horses generally have,—the long, graceful, flowing hair,—but instead of these, serpents were appended—"their tails were like unto serpents;" that is, they resembled serpents, and like serpents, "they had heads."

¶ *With them they do hurt.*—The description is very singular; but the only intention is to make the horses appear as fearful as possible; to give them the power of doing fearful execution. It must be confessed that horses and horsemen thus armed would be invincible. Breathing fire, and smoke, and brimstone, they could not be resisted in front; and having tails like serpents, with heads, (the part of a serpent's body in which his fearful power lies,) they were safe from assaults in the rear. Such is the picture; and when we consider how much in the habit of hieroglyphical writing were the ancients, and what strange pictures they sometimes presented to give the idea of fearful power, we shall be less surprised at the revelator's images.

20. *Were not killed by these plagues.*—The plagues mentioned in the Apocalypse will be treated of more fully under xxii. 19. The plagues in this case were certainly not in the immortal state, but were such as were inflicted by the armies that came up against Jerusalem. ¶ *Repented not.*—See under verse 21.

¶ *Worship devils.*—The word here

works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood which neither can see, nor hear nor walk :

is not *diabolous*, but *daimonia*. "It is manifest here (says Dr. Campbell) that the word rendered *devils* ought to have been *demons*; nor is it less manifest, that every being who is not the one true God, however much conceived to be superior to us, whether good or bad, hero or heroine, demigod or demi-goddess, angel or departed spirit, saint or sinner, real or imaginary, is in the class comprised under the name demons. And the worship of them is as much *demonolatry*, (if you will admit the word,) as the worship of Jupiter, Mars, and Minerva. This may serve to show of how much consequence it is to attend with accuracy to the differences to be found in the application of words. It is only thereby that we can learn their exact import, and be qualified to judge both of the subject and of the completion of scriptural prophecies. As to the worship of the devil, *tou diabolou*, nothing can be clearer than that in Scripture no pagans are charged with it; and as to the worship *tou daimonian*, beings subordinate to the Supreme, it may be considered how far we can with justice say that the pagans are peculiarly chargeable. It will deserve to be remarked, by the way, that the only difference between *demonolatry* and *idolatry* appears to be, that the first regards the object of worship, the second the mode. The former is a violation of the first commandment; the latter of the second. The connection, however, is so intimate between them, that they have rarely, if ever, been found separate."—(Prelim. Diss. vi., p. i., sec. 19.) The Jews seem to have been guilty of both demonolatry and idolatry; so they not only worshipped demons, but

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication nor of their thefts.

idols, also, of gold and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood.

21. *Neither repented they.* — This is true to the facts as they existed. Notwithstanding the Roman armies encompassed the city, notwithstanding the fall of the city and temple was very imminent, notwithstanding there had been destruction on every hand, and full a third part of the people had been slain, yet those who remained, viz., “the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues,” repented not of their wickedness. It is a well known fact that the Jews grew more wicked as their troubles increased; they seemed to grow more and more forgetful of God as they fell more and more into need of his protection. The Romans had a very severe and dangerous service to perform, even after their forces around the city had been increased by calling the squadrons from the Euphrates. It seemed for a long time doubtful whether Vespasian, and after him Titus, would obtain full possession of the city and temple, and put down all opposition. What would have been the consequence had the Jews repented of their idolatries, and all their evil deeds, — [for idolatry is put in the Scriptures as a metaphor for all kinds of sin,] — before their final fall, we will not undertake to say; but it seems almost impossible that the Romans should ever have prevailed, had the Jews maintained a virtuous union among themselves. The city was very strong in a military point of view. It stood on a high elevation, and had great works and ramparts to secure it. Josephus says, “The temple was like a citadel, having walls of its own, which had more labor and pains bestowed on them than the rest. The cloisters where-with the temple was enclosed were an excellent fortification.” See his third Dissertation. And the same

writer states, in another place, that when Titus had obtained possession of the upper city, “he admired not only some other places of strength in it, but particularly those strong towers which the tyrants, in their mad conduct, had relinquished: for when he saw their solid altitude, and the largeness of their several stones, and the exactness of their joints, as also how great was their breadth, and how extensive their length, he expressed himself after the manner following: ‘We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers?’” — (*De Bell. Jud.*, Book vi., ch. ix., sec. 1.) Thus we have the testimony of the Roman commander, that the *final* overthrow of this people must be attributed to the interposition of God. This fact is treated of in the 10th and 11th chapters of Revelation. We have seen that it was God who gave them up to destruction; and the reason is described in the verses before us, viz., “The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues [i. e., such plagues as had already occurred] repented not of the works of their hands.” They resorted to deeds that might have been expected only from those given up to idolatry. They plundered the temple, melted down the sacred utensils, emptied the vessels of the sacred wine and oil, and distributed them among their followers; and these worse than idolatrous iniquities led Josephus to say, “that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, that the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by; for it had brought forth a gene-

## CHAPTER X.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud :

ration of men more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments, for by their madness it was that all the people came to be destroyed." — (*De Bell. Jud.*, Book v., ch. xiii., sec. 6.) When, therefore, all which they had suffered, especially under Cestius Gallus, Vespasian and Titus, failed to bring them to repentance, (the Roman armies still encompassing their city,) it seems God gave them over to absolute and immediate destruction, — city, temple and nation. An angel came down from heaven; and with one foot on the land, and another on the sea, he cried with a loud voice, and swore by him that liveth forever and ever, that there should be time no longer, i. e., that no more time should elapse before the final overthrow. But of this we shall treat in our notes on the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

At the conclusion of the last chapter, we read that the people repented not "of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts;" ch. ix. 21; and because they repented not, God's forbearance endured no longer. He resolved then to execute judgment without *any further delay*. And this, let it be remembered, is the *principal fact* brought out in chap. x. The plan of the revelator in respect to the fall of Jerusalem is fast hastening to its development.

1. *Another mighty angel*. — This has reference to some *former* angel, perhaps to the one of whom we read in ch. ix. 1, under the figure of the star, who came down from heaven to unlock the bottomless pit; or it may refer to the one mentioned ch. v. 2.

¶ *Come down from heaven*. — This mighty angel," this angel of great

and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire :

power, came down from heaven. i. e., he was divinely commissioned.

¶ *Clothed with a cloud*. — He was clothed or enveloped in a cloud. To come in the clouds of heaven was, among the Jews, the known symbol of divine power and majesty. The divine presence upon the mount, at the giving of the law, was veiled in a cloud. Our Saviour said that at his second advent he should come "in the clouds of heaven, with *power* and great glory;" Matt. xxiv. 30. Hence the angel is said to be a *mighty* angel.

¶ *A rainbow upon his head*. — The "great glory" of his coming is described by the "rainbow upon his head." A splendid figure! and what a unity of metaphors — the cloud and the rainbow! ¶ *As it were the sun*. — His face was as the sun.

This was the exact description given of the Son of man, ch. i. 16: "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." See also the account of the transfiguration; Matt. xvii. 2. ¶ *His feet as pillars of fire*. — This, also, is the language applied to Jesus, ch. i. 15: "His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace." The angel then seems to be the Son of man, who descends from heaven to judge the nations, and to bring the first covenant to a close, agreeably to his repeated declarations. Jesus is peculiarly the angel of the Lord, above all other angels, the "messenger of the [new] covenant," Mal. iii. 1, which at the second advent he was to establish by putting aside the old. The appearance of this angel was pronounced by Sir William Jones to equal in sublimity any description to be found in the inspired writers, and to be far superior to anything of the kind produced by human composition.

2. *A little book open*. — This little

2 And he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

book seems to represent what remained of the seventh seal. It is not *the book (Biblion)* of which we found an account in v. 1, said to have been sealed with seven seals ; but a *little book (Biblaridion)* the diminutive of *Biblion*. The word occurs nowhere else in the Bible, except in this chapter ; but it occurs in classic authors. The sealed book consisted of seven parts, each part sealed by itself. Six seals had been opened, and the contents declared. The opening of the *seventh*, or final seal, is described viii. 1 ; and the seventh, or final seal, differs from either of the others, in that it was subdivided into seven parts, denoted by the seven trumpets, viii. 2, 6. Six of the angels had sounded ; see ix. 13. The seventh remained to sound. What remained, therefore, to be revealed, although very important in itself, and the denouement of the whole tragedy, was but the seventh fraction of the seventh seal. How appropriately, then, was it called a *little book*, when spoken of in comparison with the book with seven seals. And mark, it was not brought forward as a little book *sealed*, but *open* ; for the seven seals having been broken, there remained no more to be broken. ¶ *Right foot upon the sea.* — The mighty angel had his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth, or land. This was to denote his control over both, — over the whole earth, — universal control. Why is the earth called God's footstool ? Is it not because he has dominion over it ? It is beneath him ; he is its sovereign. To make one's enemies his footstool, is to put them completely in subjection to him. So when it is said, the angel set his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, is meant that he had dominion over them. We know of no angel who ever had this wide do-

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

minion, except the Lord Jesus. He was the angel of the covenant, and to him had been given "all power in heaven and on earth ;" Matt. xxviii. 18. His enemies were to be made his footstool ; and this is signified by his placing one foot upon the sea, and another upon the land. The time of his great power had come.

3. *Cried with a loud voice.* — He demanded attention. There is a striking resemblance here to the descent of God upon Sinai, when he gave the law : "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet *exceedingly loud* ;" Exod. xix. 16. So the mighty angel "cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, and seven thunders uttered their voices." Thus it is seen, that the description of the giving of the law is like that of its passing away ; only in the first case the agent is God ; in the second he is the Son, the "messenger of the [new] covenant." *Seven thunders*, means nothing more than great thunder. Seven, as we have repeatedly had occasion to remark, was a perfect number with the Jewish writers ; it was a round or series that was continually occurring. The Apocalypse is full of proofs of this. *Seven* of the Asiatic churches were addressed ; there were *seven* golden candlesticks ; *seven* stars which are the *seven* angels of the churches ; the Lamb had *seven* horns and *seven* eyes, which are the *seven* spirits of God ; *seven* angels stood before God, who had *seven* trumpets ; there were *seven* last plagues and *seven* golden vials full of wrath, &c. &c. In other parts of the Bible the same use is made of the number. Certainly this word is not to be understood strictly. This voice of the angel is the same that was ascribed to the Son of God ; i. 15 : "His voice as the sound of many

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

waters." Sir Isaac Newton, speaking of this angel, says he appears in "the shape in which Christ appeared in the beginning of this prophecy." — (Pt. ii., ch. 2.) Moreover, what other being than the Lamb had the power to reveal the contents of this book ?

4. *Seven thunders*,—as mentioned in the preceding verse. The voice was one that could be understood ; it was not merely thunder ; but an articulate voice, loud like seven-fold thunder. ¶ *I was about to write*.—He had been commanded to do so. "What thou seest write in a book ;" Rev. i. 11. But more especially ver. 19 : "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Agreeably to this command, he was about to write. ¶ *Seal up those things*.—The words were not to be written. Observe, they were not first written and then sealed up, but were not written at all. We cannot, therefore, know what the import was. It is possible this has reference to the fact that the precise *day and hour* of the fall of Jerusalem was not to be made known. Our Lord assures us that no one, neither the angels in heaven, knew the precise time when the holy city would fall. God alone knew when that event would transpire. This was one of the circumstances which Jesus could not utter in his account of the fall of Jerusalem, while he was on earth ; and it is possible this was the fact that John was forbidden to write. This is a mere conjecture, however, and we offer it as such. There is another conjecture. On the appearance of the mighty angel, the voices like seven thunders, broke forth, it may be in a

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that

strain of praise to the angel, as the hosts of heaven had praised the Lamb, on his appearance, v. 8, 9. But as the praise was no part of the prophecy in this case, and as the revelator was concerned to write only what the angel communicated, so it was said to him, write not those things which the seven thunders uttered. At any rate, whatever those things were, it cannot be important for us to know ; for if it had been necessary for the revelator to communicate them, he would not have been forbidden to write them.

5. *Upon the sea and upon the earth*.—For the explanation of this phraseology, see ver. 2. ¶ *Lifted up his hand to heaven*.—In the metaphorical language of the Scriptures, God is said to make solemn oath, and even to lift up his hand in doing ; Exod. vi. 8 ; Deut. xxxii. 40 ; Heb. vi. 13. It is a figure to show that the announcement was made in the most solemn and impressive manner. The revelator evidently borrowed his description from Daniel : "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half ; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished ;" xii. 7.

6. *Sware by him that liveth, &c.*—This was the ancient form of description of the Supreme Being. See Neh. ix. 6. Also Rev. iv. 11, and xiv. 7. And what was sworn to ? What great fact was declared in this solemn manner ? ¶ *That there should*

therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are

*be time no longer.* — That is, that there should be time no longer before the judgment transpired which had been described; or, in other words, that there should be no more *delay*; for *chronos* signifies sometimes *delay*. Donnegan says, *Chronos* signifies “time, duration, frequently a long time, — also *delay*.” “*Chronon empoiein*, to cause *delay*.” Hence the words may signify *there shall be DELAY* no longer. The sentence is, *Oti chronos ouk estai eti*, literally, “that time not shall be further,” or there shall be no further time. The *end* had come; the *end* of the age, the last days, the passing away of the old heaven and earth. These things had come; there should be no further delay. Adam Clarke is correct on this passage. After quoting the words, “That there should be time no longer,” he adds, — “That the great counsels relative to the events already predicted should be immediately fulfilled; and that there should be no longer *delay*. This has no reference (he adds) to the day of judgment.” Again he adds, “The word *chronos*, in the above place, seems to signify *delay* simply; and probably refers to the long-suffering of God being ended in reference to Jerusalem; for I all along take for probable, that this book was written *previously* to the destruction of that city.” — (Note at the end of the 10th chapter.) Lightfoot says, “He sware by him that liveth forever, that there should be *delay* of time no longer.” And he adds, “At last Christ swears that there shall be no more *delay*; the word *chronos* must be taken so here.” — (Harmony of New Testament.) Wakefield translates the words, “that there should be no longer *delay*.” There is a valuable note in Hammond, which we will not take up room to quote here, the facts we have given being deemed amply sufficient.

therein, that there should be time no longer :

### 7 But in the days of the voice

The truth, then, to which the mighty angel [the Lord Jesus] swore was, that the time had come for the first covenant to pass away, and for the city of Jerusalem and the nation of the Jews to fall. “Jerusalem was compassed with armies,” Luke xxi. 20, as was shown in the notes on the 9th chapter; every preparation was made; the people would not repent; and the Son of God, in whom dwelt “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” made solemn declaration, that “there should be no more *delay*,” or “that no more time should elapse” before the holy city should “be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.” The sense which we have given to this verse will be rendered more apparent by what is said on the following verse.

7. *In the days of the voice of the seventh angel.* — This is offered in explanation of the great fact stated in the preceding verse, that time should be no more, or that no more time should elapse previously to the consummation to which the revelator was hastening in his description. In proof that no more time should elapse, the revelator adds, that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (whose sounding is described in the following chapter) the mystery of God *should be finished*. The end was near. The revelator had already shown “Jerusalem compassed with armies;” ch. ix. That point and the finishing of the mystery of God were almost simultaneous; hence, as the mystery of God was about to be finished, there could be “time no longer.” ¶ *The mystery of God should be finished.* — What was this “mystery of God?” See the verse already referred to, viz., xi. 15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, [i. e., most important truths were announced, to wit,] saying, *The kingdoms of this*

of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard

*world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign forever and ever."* This, then, was the mystery of God, viz., the final prevalence of the gospel and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ over all the kingdoms of the earth. This was the reign of God, and the opening of his SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, after the outward temple upon Mount Zion had been levelled with the dust ; xi. 19. Now that this very consummation is throughout the Bible styled the mystery of God, will be apparent to every one who will make the examination. It is styled a mystery not because it is unintelligible and incomprehensible, but because it had not before been fully known. See the very important remarks of Parkhurst, in his Lexicon, under the word *muserion*, or mystery. This mystery of God is spoken of by Paul, in Rom. xi. 25, 26, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this MYSTERY, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."—Here we have the great fact of the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, asserted by Paul, and declared by him to be the mystery of God. See also the language of Paul in Eph. iii. 3—9. "By revelation he made known unto me *the mystery*, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and *prophets* by the spirit." And what does St. Paul assure the Ephe-

from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.

sians this mystery was? See the passage already pointed out, and it will appear that the mystery was, "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." Hence Paul "preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," and labored "to make all men see what is the fellowship of *the mystery* which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." There is no dispute, then, that the mystery of God was the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles ; the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, which was done most effectually when the first covenant, the peculiar distinction of the Jews, passed away, and the kingdom of God came with power. ¶ *Declared to his servants the prophets.*—This mystery of God has been the subject matter of all the prophets. St. Paul, in referring to the mystery, shows that he quoted from one of the prophets. "*As it is written*, [i. e., in Isaiah lix. 20,] there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer," &c. The mystery was to be fully disclosed ; and the great purpose of God to make Jews and Gentiles as one, in respect to divine things, was to commence to go into effect. The gospel was to be set up, in its most enlarged operation ; and in this way the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of Christ, who was to gain the victory over the potentates of the earth.

8. *And the voice which I heard*, viz., the voice mentioned in verse 4. This voice spake again to the revelator, and directed him to go and take the little book out of the hand of the

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter,

but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth

angel, who had heaven and earth under his feet.

9. *Eat it up.*—The figure of eating the roll, or book, seems to be taken from Ezekiel. See ii. 8—10: "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me: and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Here, we perceive, that eating the book signified being made fully acquainted with the contents thereof.

"He spread it before me." It is a common metaphor of our times, to say of the reader who is zealously intent on reading a work, that he eats or devours it. Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;" xv. 16.

¶ *Make thy belly bitter.*—The book was said to be in the belly bitter, but in the mouth sweet as honey. The figure is evidently drawn from Ezek. iii. 3: "And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." This agrees in part with the revelator's description of the little book. ¶ *In thy mouth sweet as honey.*—See under next verse.

10. *In my mouth sweet as honey.*—What is intended by the figure it is not difficult to see. The revelator took the book out of the angel's hand, and found it to contain in part words of great consolation, and in part things that gave him great concern and sorrow. Such was precisely the

effect that might have been expected from a right understanding of the events that were to occur at the time of the destruction of the Jewish state.

¶ *My belly was bitter.*—Take the facts, and they show the propriety of this description. To the Christians, the coming of the kingdom of God with power, and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem, were very desirable events, in one view of the case. The Christians, when those events transpired, were promised deliverance from their enemies. All afflicted and cast down as they had been, they had seen days of great affliction. Would not the news of their deliverance then be sweet? But no sooner had they read this in the counsels of God, than they came to a frightful counterpart to their own joys,—we mean the terrible sufferings of their enemies. No tongue can describe the miseries that the Jews brought upon themselves. Every benevolent heart must have been filled with bitter sorrow that contemplated them. The book therefore was sweet in the mouth,—sweet at the first contemplation; but bitter as more fully known and considered.

11. *Thou must prophesy again.*—"Thou must prophesy AGAIN," as if a new series of prophecy were about to commence. The revelator was evidently drawing towards the end of his first series of annunciations. The events which we have noticed show that some important crisis, or closing up of events, was at hand; (and what that crisis was will be seen in the next chapter, where we have an account of the fall of the city and the temple, and the opening of the *new* spiritual temple of the gospel, the judging of the dead, small and great, &c., &c.) The eleventh chapter is a

sweet as honey : and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me,

Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

very important one, and closes the second great section of the Apocalypse, — the first extending from the beginning of the book to the end of the *third* chapter, and containing the addresses to the seven churches; the second commencing at the beginning of the *fourth* chapter and extending to the end of the *eleventh*, and containing a description of the tumults, trials, wars, suffering and destruction of the Jews, in the order observed by our Lord, in his celebrated prophecy, recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew. We have a description in the tenth chapter of the great events which foreshow the end of the Jewish state. The mighty angel descends "in the clouds of heaven;" he has dominion upon the land and upon the sea; he swears that there shall be no more delay; and that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, (who was about to sound, *melle salpizein*,) the mystery of God should be finished, as spoken by the prophets. To our mind this clearly refers to the closing up of the Jewish dispensation, and the solemn circumstances by which that event was distinguished. The seventh trumpet was to follow the sixth *quickly*; see xi. 14; and when the seventh angel sounded, then the gospel should prevail over Judaism; the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of Christ; the dead small and great should be judged; the old temple on Zion should be levelled with the dust; and thereafter neither on Zion nor Gerizim should people worship God, but everywhere, in his spiritual temple, (xi. 19,) should their prayers and praises be heard. So the Son of God foretold: "The hour cometh [is about to come] when ye shall neither in this mountain, [Gerizim,] nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship the Father

in spirit and in truth;" John iv. 21, 22; i. e., in the kingdom of heaven, under the new covenant, the spiritual Jerusalem, or heavenly temple.

¶ *Before many peoples and nations, &c.*

— At the end of the *eleventh* chapter, the prophecy, so far as it respects the destruction of Jerusalem, will close; but the revelation to St. John will not close. All that was revealed to him he had not disclosed. He was to begin another series of prophecy, of a more general nature. The former had been confined principally to the Jews; the latter was to embrace many other nations in its compass. "Thou must prophesy *again*, before *many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings*," referring doubtless to the Roman empire, composed of many nations and tongues, prefigured, in chap. xii., by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. There is no difficulty in explaining this figure of the beast. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman [Rome] sitteth;" Rev. xvii. 9; "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings;" xvii. 12; and "the waters which thou sawest [for the beast rose 'up out of the sea,' xiii. 1] are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," xvii. 15, which are the same to whom it is said the revelator should prophesy, viz., "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" x. 11.

If commentators had been willing, in explaining the book of Revelation, to let one part elucidate another, and to bring the prophets to their aid, instead of forcing in their own visions and schemes, that book would never have been regarded as so mysterious a book as it has been thought to be. It is *not* unexplainable, if we will permit the sacred writers to be their own interpreters.

One thing more, and we close

## CHAPTER XI.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod : and

The events recorded in the 12th chapter and onwards, are not necessarily posterior, in point of time, to those events referred to in the preceding chapters. Some may think, not understanding the plan of the book, that because they are described in *succeeding* chapters, therefore they must succeed regularly in the order of time. But it may appear, on examination, that the revelator goes back, when he begins his *new* prophecy, to the rise of Christianity in connection with the Roman empire, as he had taken it up in previous chapters in connection with the Jewish nation. But we shall see.

## CHAPTER XI.

We saw, in the preceding chapter, that the revelator had come, in his description, to the destruction of Jerusalem. The mighty angel had descended from heaven, and with one foot on the land and the other on the sea, had sworn that the end had come, (i. e., the end of the Jewish world or age;) that there should no more time elapse before that event, or, in other words, that there should be no more delay. All this we think was accompanied by a strength of evidence, which cannot be resisted. With the expectation, then, of finding a description of the fall of Judaism, and the triumph of Christianity, let us enter upon the examination of the chapter.

1. *Reed like unto a rod.* — This was for the purpose of measurement, — a reed, or staff, like a measuring rod. The description is taken from Ezekiel : "And he brought me thither, and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed ; and he stood in the gate ;" xl. 3. ¶ *Rise,*

the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

*and measure the temple of God.* — Thus, it will be seen, the temple was yet standing. And as, in laying the plan of a city, the place is measured and marked off, so here, as Jerusalem is about to be destroyed, it is measured and marked off for destruction. The laying out of the city forms a very prominent subject in the prophecy of Ezekiel ; see chapters xl., xli., xlii., xliii., xliv., &c. In taking a momentary retrospection of the history of that city, this matter came up to the revelator's mind. He employs the figure, therefore, in marking out the city for destruction ; and it will also be seen that he uses the same metaphor, in describing the holy city, new Jerusalem, which came down from God out of heaven ; xxi. 15—21. A command to measure shows that he who gives the command has the right to repair, or to throw down. Hence, when God, in the metaphorical language of the Jews, is said to be about to destroy the earth, he in the first place *measures* it. "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth ; he beheld, and drove asunder the nations ; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow ;" Hab. iii. 5, 6. ¶ *And the altar.* — So Ezekiel measured ; xliii. 13. We see, then, that, in the style of the sacred writers, to measure a city signifies simply to mark it out, for any purpose whatsoever. And we shall have occasion to show, on Rev. xxi. 15—21, that even the conversion of the people of a city, and their return to God, is described as the rebuilding of a city, and this of course would be denoted by the re-measuring of it.

2. *Court which is without the temple* — The court of the Gentiles was in the large space of about twenty acres

2 But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and

in which the temple was placed. The whole area was surrounded by a very substantial wall, nearly fifty feet in height. The site of the temple covered nearly the northern half of this area; and the court of the Gentiles was the southern part of it, which occupied nearly as much room as all the rest. It will be seen, then, that the court of the Gentiles was "without the temple," or outside of it.

¶ *Measure it not.* — This had always been given to the Gentiles, and therefore needed not to be measured; since the revelator measured only that part, as being peculiarly now the object of his description, which had not been profaned by Gentile feet before. When Ezekiel measured, he referred to the profane place: "He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place;" xlii. 20. ¶ *It is given unto the Gentiles.* — Such had been long the ordinance of God. As the city was being measured because it was to be given up to the Gentiles, there was no need of measuring that part to which they had been invariably admitted. But the whole was now about to be given up to them; "the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months;" and this is precisely the description given by our Lord himself of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies: "And they [the Jews] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" Luke xxi. 24. It seems highly probable that the revelator had his mind on this passage, when he wrote the words on which we are remarking; and it serves to show that he is describing the destruction of Jerusalem as foretold  
 ♥ Jesus. ¶ *Forty and two months.* —

measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy

This expression seems to have originated in Dan. vii. 25, where we read of "a time, times, and the dividing of time," meaning one year, two years, and a half of a year, or three years and a half. It denoted the time of the persecution of the church, and triumph of the Roman power. Three years and a half are just forty two months; and forty-two months, of thirty days each, (as the Jews reckoned,) are just twelve hundred and sixty days; ch. xi. 3, and xii. 6. During the forty-two months, the holy city was to be trodden under foot; xi. 2; and the beast was to continue; xiii. 5. During the twelve hundred and sixty days the two witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth; xi. 3; and the woman was to remain in the wilderness to which she fled; xii. 6; and this appears to have been simultaneous with the "time, times, and half a time," mentioned chap. xii. 14. We give no credit to the hypothesis, that these twelve hundred and sixty days were so many prophetic years, a day being put for a year. We see no proof of this whatsoever. Neither do we suppose that twelve hundred and sixty days is strictly intended. We regard this designation, in all its forms, as a prophetic metaphor of time. The only remark which we can make with confidence is, that in all its forms, the expression describes the seasons of the persecution of the church, and the triumph of the Roman power. Prof. Stuart says, "Is this period to be regarded as *literal*; or as merely a figurative mode of designating a short period, by a reference to a well known period of time in the book of Daniel, vii. 25; xii. 7? The same question occurs in regard to the next verse, and some other passages in the sequel. After all the investigation which I have been able to make, I feel compelled to believe that the writer refers to a literal and definite period, although not so exact tha

city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

a single day, or even a few days, of variation from it would interfere with the object he has in view. It is certain that the invasion of the Romans lasted just about the length of the period named, until Jerusalem was taken. And although the city itself was not besieged so long, yet the metropolis, in this case, as in innumerable others in both Testaments, appears to stand for the country of Judea. During the invasion of Judea by the Romans, the faithful testimony of the persecuted witnesses for Christianity is continued, while at last they are slain. The patience of God, in deferring so long the destruction of the persecutors, is displayed by this; and especially his mercy in continuing to warn and reprove them. This is a natural, simple and easy method of interpretation, to say the least, and one which, although it is not difficult to raise objections against it, I feel constrained to adopt."—(Com. on Rev. xi. 2. See also his Hints on Prophecy, 117 *et seq.*)

3. *My two witnesses.*—It has been a great difficulty with commentators to tell who these two witnesses were. Hammond calls them "the main difficulty of this chapter." Let us examine the matter with care. We shall come to a conclusion very different from that of Hammond. 1st. They were *Christian* witnesses, or witnesses of Christ. 2d. In verse 10 they are called "prophets;" they were persecuted and killed; ver. 7; and were at last received up into heaven; ver. 12. 3d. Let it be remembered that the twelve hundred and sixty days of their prophecy, as well as the "three days and a half" that they lay dead, were all finished before the destruction of Jerusalem; for we are told that *at the same hour* in which they were received up into heaven, "there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell," ver. 13, which refers to the *partial* destruc-

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall

tion of Jerusalem, and not to its entire overthrow, which is mentioned verses 15—19. We have said, that previously to giving a final account of the overthrow of the city and nation of the Jews, John took a momentary retrospection of their history, especially that of the temple, and their opposition to the religion of Jesus; and that opposition is portrayed under the treatment of the witnesses. 4th. We do not think we are to construe strictly the number *two*, as it respects these witnesses; for this number, like that of *seven*, which occurs so frequently in the Apocalypse, seems to have been taken from the Levitical statutes. The testimony of *two* or three unexceptionable witnesses was regarded as sufficient; Deut. xvii. 6. Under that law one witness was not sufficient; Deut. xix. 15; but *two* were sufficient. Christ adopted this into his code for settling church difficulties; Matt. xviii. 16. He was not condemned until there were found *two* false witnesses; Matt. xxvi. 60; see also 2 Cor. xiii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 19; Heb. x. 28. Here, then, is reason enough why the Christian witnesses should be spoken of as two witnesses. In fact, our Lord sent out his disciples by twos: "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city, and place, whither he himself would come;" Luke x. 1. But, 5th. There is a still stronger reason than the foregoing, why the Christian witnesses were spoken of as *two*. The revelator unquestionably had in his mind the two Jewish leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel, under whom the temple had been reared; and he compared to them the Christian witnesses, who were engaged in rearing the spiritual temple of the gospel. See further under verse 4. ¶ *They shall prophesy.*—Christian instruction was sometimes spoken of as prophecy. "Having then gifts, dif-

prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks

fering according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;" Rom. xii. 6; see also 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiii. 2, 9; xiv. 1, 24, 31, 39; 1 Tim. iv. 14. ¶ *A thousand two hundred and threescore days.*—This is the same expression, in effect, as the forty-two months mentioned in the preceding verse. Forty-two multiplied by thirty, the number of days the Jews allowed to a month, make twelve hundred and sixty, or a thousand two hundred and threescore. ¶ *Clothed in sackcloth.*—This was a sign of affliction: and these witnesses prophesied during the time of the church's greatest trial. See under the following verse.

4. *These are the two olive-trees.*—In Zechariah, ch. iv., Joshua and Zerubbabel are represented by two olive trees, planted by the sides of the candlesticks, to supply oil for the lamps therein, olive oil being the common material used for that purpose. They were the leaders in the rebuilding of the temple, and encouraged the people, and supplied them with zeal, as the olive trees supplied the lamps with oil; and under the fidelity and perseverance of Zerubbabel, the great mountain became a plain, [i. e., great difficulties were overcome,] and the head stone of the temple was brought forth with shouting, "Grace, grace, unto it." The reader must peruse the whole of the 4th chapter of Zechariah. In that chapter we have an account of the building of the temple, which was about to be destroyed when John wrote. Hence his reference to the passage in Zechariah. The prophet described the two leaders as "two olive trees," and "two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole

standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their ene-

earth;" Zech. iv. 11, 14; and this led the revelator to speak of the Christian witnesses as "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth," as in the verse before us.

Having thus given abundant reason why the Christian witnesses were spoken of as *two*, (although no stress is to be put on that number, as though there were any two particular Christians referred to,) we proceed to show (what perhaps is scarcely necessary) that the early Christian preachers were called "witnesses." "Ye are witnesses of these things;" Luke xxiv. 48. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me;" Acts i. 8; "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof ye are all witnesses;" ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 31, 32; x. 39—43. It was a favorite figure of the apostle John, to represent the Christian teachers as witnesses bearing testimony. 1 Epis. iv. 14; Gos. iii. 11; v. 39; and many other places. Nothing can be more evident, than that the early Christian preachers were spoken of in the character of *witnesses*. God gave power to those witnesses, and they prophesied during their season, clothed in sackcloth, as a sign of their great sorrow at the woes that were to fall upon their enemies, in which spirit Christ mourned over Jerusalem; and also a sign of the tribulation through which they entered into the kingdom of God.

5. *Fire proceedeth out of their mouth.*

—This is a figure like that which we have already found in ix. 17, 18, only in that case it was applied to the horses. As it respects the witnesses, it was a symbolical representation of their means of defence, and of the protection afforded them by the Father. They could not be slain until it was

mies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the

the will of God ; they were invincible until their work was done. If any man attacked them, he would fall before the judgments of God.

6. *Power to shut heaven* — The power of Elijah to suspend the rain, was a proof that he was the servant of the living God ; 1 Kings xvii. 1. This fact, in the sacred history of the Jews, was perfectly familiar to them all. No man could have that power, as they all knew, without being an approved servant of the Most High.

¶ *Turn them to blood.* — Here is a reference also to Moses, who, as the servant of God, had wonderful power, by which he turned the water of Egypt to blood, and brought plagues all over that land. The object of the revelator was to show that these Christian witnesses were truly God's servants, as much as Moses or Elijah. The early Christians certainly had the power of doing wonderful works in attestation of the truths which they declared. What they bound on earth was bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth was loosed in heaven, if *two* agreed as to what they should ask. So said Christ, Matt. xviii. 18, 19 : " Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Two witnesses, under this rule, would have great power. ¶ *Smite the earth with all plagues.* — The figure here is borrowed, undoubtedly, from the

earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

plagues of Egypt. But concerning the plagues which are mentioned generally in the Apocalypse, we refer the reader to what we shall say, under xxii. 19.

7. *The beast that ascendeth, &c.* — When their duty was done, and God had no more for them to do here below, the beast, who could not come out of the pit without permission of God, shall assault them, and overcome them, and kill them. The figure of the bottomless pit, we have explained in our notes on chap. ix. 2, to which we refer the reader. This is the first instance of our having met with the apocalyptic BEAST. The beast is a very different animal from the four beasts, or living creatures, mentioned in the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of the Apocalypse. The latter are *Zoa*, living creatures ; the former is *to Therion*, a wild venomous animal. This beast we shall consider more fully under succeeding chapters. It is sufficient to observe here, that it represents the leading power by which the Christians were put to death. ¶ *Made war against them.* — The beast made war against them, and overcame them, and *killed them*. The Roman beast had dominion in Judea ; and it was only by the Roman law that the Christians could be put to death. When Pilate gave up Jesus to the Jews, and said, " Take him, and judge him according to *your* law," they said, " It is not lawful for *us* to put any man to death ;" John xviii. 31. The Jews could not legally kill ; the power to inflict death was reserved to the *Roman* law ; when therefore the *killing* of the Christians

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half,

is referred to, even though it be in Judea, the *Roman beast* is introduced as the agent of destruction.

8. *In the street of the great city.*—They were killed in Jerusalem; their dead bodies were seen in the streets of that city. ¶ *Called Sodom and Egypt.*—That wicked place was sometimes called Sodom, on account of its enormous crimes. It was to the leaders of Israel that Isaiah addressed himself when he said, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom," &c.; i. 10. Jerusalem was wicked like Sodom and Egypt, and hence was spiritually called by those names. ¶ *Where our Lord was crucified.*—But the revelator makes it certain what city he meant, by saying, "where also our Lord was crucified." Jerusalem then was certainly intended.

9. *See their dead bodies.*—The people of all nations who entered within the walls of Jerusalem, should see their dead bodies, denied the right of burial; a crime for which the Jews were afterwards visited with a like fate; with terrific judgments, under which they died in such numbers that they had none to bury them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters, for God poured out their wickedness upon them; Jer. xiv. 16. The revelator seems to have had in his mind the language of the Psalmist: "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,

and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and

the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us;" *Psa. lxxix. 1—4.*

10. *Send gifts one to another.*—To send gifts was a token of hilarity and joy. It was a custom especially on great occasions of rejoicing. These Christian witnesses had very faithfully and very severely reprovèd mankind, particularly the Jews, for their sins. The case of Stephen is in point here. They could scarcely contain themselves while he spoke to them. "They were cut to the heart; and they gnashed on him with their teeth;" *Acts vii. 54.* They cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him, and killed him; *verse 57.* Glad indeed were they to get such men out of the way; for they trembled and were tormented when their sins were pointed out. The death of such, therefore, was a cause of rejoicing to the wicked.

11. *Three days and a half.*—This is about the same length of time which intervened between our Lord's death and resurrection. Perhaps the revelator had his mind on that fact. ¶ *They stood upon their feet.*—It is not absolutely certain, that the account of the treatment of the Christian witnesses is to be understood in its literal import, although we have so explained it. The language is susceptible of either interpretation; though we should be led by *Rev. xx. 4,* to

a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

suppose that it is to be taken literally: "I saw the souls of them that were *beheaded* for the *witness* of Jesus," &c., referring to the Christian *witnesses*. If we adopt the literal interpretation, then we are to suppose, that after the bodies had lain in the streets of Jerusalem for a short time, they were raised to life again, and ascended to heaven. If we take the metaphorical sense, we shall understand the death of the witnesses to describe the tribulations and sufferings of those men who rendered themselves eminent by bearing witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Ezekiel had described the low state of the house of Israel under the figure of *death*. He saw a valley full of bones which were very dry. Subsequently there was a shaking among them; the sinews and flesh came upon them and the skin covered them; breath entered into them, and they "lived and stood upon their feet;" xxxvii. 1—10. The language of the revelator is similar: "Life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." The resurrection of the witnesses, in this view, would represent their deliverance from suffering, the success of their cause, the fulfilment of their predictions, and the triumph of the truth.

12. *Ascended up to heaven*. — If the account be understood literally, they ascended, like Jesus, into heaven. If metaphorically, it may be intended to complete the figure, and show that unto the last God gave them evident

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

signs of his approval, as much so as if he called them to dwell in his immediate presence.

13. *Tenth part of the city fell*. — This verse shows that the revelator was describing scenes that were connected with the *partial* destruction of the city; and that its *total* overthrow had not yet come, although it was very near at hand. He had taken a momentary retrospection of the building of the temple and the sufferings of the Christians in the holy city, before he proceeded to describe its final overthrow. Jesus told the Jews, in connection with his description of the overthrow of their city, that they had killed and crucified the holy men whom God had sent to them; and that their nation should be held accountable for "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Zacharias unto the blood of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar." And the punishment of this treatment of God's *witnesses* he said, should "come upon this generation;" Matt. xxiii. 34—36.

14. *The third woe cometh quickly*. — There is no delay; the mighty angel had sworn there should be none; Rev. x. 6. The first woe embraced the first approach of the Roman armies; the second woe embraced the final approach of those armies, and the declaration of the angel that the *end* had come, and time should be no more; and the third woe embraced the sounding of the seventh angel, and the winding up of the great scene.

15 And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are be-

And that no considerable time elapsed between the *second* and *third* woe, is evident from the declaration of the angel, and also from the words, "The third woe cometh quickly." Let us attend to the sounding of the SEVENTH angel, the *last* of the series.

15. *The seventh angel sounded.*—The *seventh* trumpet was the *great* trumpet, — the *sabbatical* trumpet, which announced *the end* ; no other trumpet was to follow, for this was *the last*, in the matter the revelator was describing. We have stated again and again, that seven was a favorite arithmetical series with the Jews. The revelator speaks of the seven churches, seven golden candlesticks, seven stars, seven horns, seven eyes, seven spirits, seven angels, seven thunders, seven trumpets, seven last plagues, seven vials full of wrath, &c. &c. When, therefore, we come to the *seventh* trumpet, we come to the last of the series. There is no *eighth* trumpet, or *ninth* ; the closing of the whole scene is described under the *seventh*. ¶ *The kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*—And what happened when the *seventh* angel sounded ? Hark ! "There were great voices in heaven !" The mystery of God is about to be finished ! And what did these great voices in heaven say ? Listen again ! "THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST ; AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER." This is the establishment of Christianity upon the fall of Judaism. It is the setting up of the reign of God and his Christ. It was the subject of all sacred prophecy, that in the days of the Roman power the God of heaven should set up a kingdom, and this kingdom was to triumph over all the nations of the earth. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not

be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever ;" Dan. ii. 44. Jesus shall reign forever and ever ; or, as Isaiah says, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end ;" ix. 7. Nebuchadnezzar was taught "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men ;" Dan. ii. 17, 25, 32. God exalteth and abaseth whom he will. Hence Daniel saw, in his vision, "that *the thrones were cast down*, and the Ancient of days did sit ;" vii. 9 ; and at that time "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him [agreeing very well with the language of the revelator] : THE JUDGMENT WAS SET AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED." See Dan. vii. 10. Now that this describes the judgment of the nations, *at the time* of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, *cannot be denied*. It was *then* that the judgment took place ; it was *then* that the books were opened ; Dan. vii. 10. And hence Daniel said, in that immediate connection, concerning the Son of man : "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed," verse 14 ; that is, "he shall reign forever and ever." Who can doubt that Daniel and the revelator described the same scene in the passages quoted ? The argument, it seems to us, has the force of demonstration. Jesus, the Son of man, established this kingdom. It was called "the kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of God." The gospel was "the gospel of the kingdom." Jesus came to usher it in. His predecessor said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand ;" Matt. iii. 2. When Jesus began to preach, he said,

come the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on

their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" iv. 17. And when he sent out the twelve, he told them to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" x. 7. It was partially established during the life of the Lord Jesus, but not fully so. His coming in his flesh was marked by his humiliation; but there was to be another coming, a different one, "in the glory of his Father." "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Again, "There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God COME WITH POWER;" Mark ix. 1. Mark the latter expression. The kingdom of God came WITH POWER at the fall of Judaism, when the *great* voices in heaven were heard to utter, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." This kingdom was at hand when Jesus and his apostles preached; they announced its coming; and they very particularly stated, again and again, that it should come *in power* and *with great glory*, during the generation then on the earth; Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27. We have not a doubt, therefore, that the sounding of the SEVENTH angel (the last, the sabbatical angel) denoted the time when the kingdom of God came with power, and the city and temple fell, and Judaism was set aside. Well might the great voices in heaven say, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his

Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever;" ver. 15. It is not meant that the kingdoms of this world had then already been, in full effect, won over to Christ. That, of course, was not true; but it was true that a train of measures were put in operation which would in time render that event certain. The work was commenced; the kingdom of heaven was established among men; and it was certain that in the operation of the principles of Christ, the whole world should at last be subdued. The language of the revelator regards the future as being present. As if a general should say, on taking some favorable position that ensured him the victory, "I have now gained the day," i. e., I have taken those measures which render success certain.

16. *Worshipped God.*—What else could we expect? These were the elders mentioned in chap. iv. 4, as sitting around the throne, the representatives perhaps of the Jewish and Gentile Christians, twelve for each,—twelve for the tribes and twelve for the apostles. They worshipped God.

17. *Hast taken to thee thy great power.*—The kingdom of God had come *with power*, viz., the power of God, which indeed he might have exerted before, had he seen fit; but he did not see fit to do so until the proper time arrived. That time did arrive at the sounding of the seventh angel; and then God took to himself his great power and reigned, and caused "the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Not that Christianity at that day prevailed in every heart, although there was a very wide diffusion of it. But the meaning is, that the opposing religion had fallen; the kingdom was to be established so

come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and they gave glory to him, who said, "The kingdom of God shall not be destroyed;" Dan. vii. 14. That train of measures was put into full and complete operation, which were to evangelize the world, in spite of all opposition. When the kingdom of God came with power, the crisis took place; then the gospel passed out of its state of humiliation into its state of power and great glory.

18. *The nations were angry.* — This agrees exactly with the testimony in the 2d Psalm, viz., that the heathen raged and the people imagined a vain thing, at the time when God set his king upon the holy hill of Zion, the place where Judaism had prevailed. ¶ *The time of the dead.* — This, too, was the time of the dead that they should be judged, a subject that will be more fully considered when we come to the 20th chapter and 12th verse. It was the time of the reward of the faithful Christians, for although they were in great difficulties, they were saved. It was the time of signal retribution to their enemies, who were overwhelmed in a common destruction. To this Peter referred when he said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter iv. 17, 18. The great mistake of commentators in regard to this judgment has been, that they have placed it at the *giving up*, or close of Christ's kingdom; whereas it is certainly represented as being *set up* when the kingdom of God came with power. *Then* "the Ancient of days did sit," and "the thrones were cast down;" *then*

gry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy

"THE JUDGMENT WAS SET AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED;" *then* "the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven;" *then* "was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him," &c. See Daniel vii. 9—14. All these events were simultaneous. How strange it is, then, that expounders of the Bible have separated so widely the judgment from the establishment of the kingdom. The judgment commenced when the kingdom of God came with power. That this judgment was to take place when the Son of man came in his power and glory to reign, is evident from a great variety of texts. For instance, take one: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Matt. xvi. 27, 28. To this agrees precisely the testimony of the Lord Jesus in the Apocalypse: "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be;" xxii. 12. Does not this assert the rewarding of men according to their works? and what else can the judging of the dead, small and great, intend? Did it not take place shortly after the revelator prophesied? Mark the language, "Behold, I come *quickly*." Professor Stuart maintains that the coming of Christ was to take place speedily; and he classes all the predictions in the Apocalypse to this effect together. "The plain and obvious sense [of *en tachei*] is speedily, quickly, shortly; so *ho kairós engus* in Rev. i. 3, plainly interprets it. See also Rev. ii. 16; iii. 11; xi. 14; xxii 7, 12, 20." — (Com. on i. 1.) Her,

servants the propnets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and

it will be seen, the professor classes all these passages together, and supposes them to refer to something that was *speedily* to take place. We inquire again, then, if men [the dead in ignorance, in trespasses, and sins] were to be rewarded according to their works at the coming of Christ, which was then near at hand, why need we look any further for it? We here apply the professor's words, which we find in another of his books, but on the same subject: "What John declared would *take place shortly*, happened according to his prediction; and if so, the dispute *whether it is all to happen over again* [we place the italics as he did] after so many centuries, cannot be a dispute of much interest or importance. One fulfilment is enough." — (Hints on Prophecy, 2d ed., 1842, pp. 141, 142.) But let us take another view of this matter. In the verse before us it is said, "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth;" xi. 18. Here the nations are described as being in existence as nations. "Thy wrath is come," as mentioned vi. 17: "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Lighfoot says, "One would think the final dissolution of all the world were spoken of; but look in ver. 16, and you find the very same words that our Saviour applies to the destruction of that people [the Jews.] They said unto the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us, &c." — (Works, vi. 291, 292.) "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged;" i. e., the time of the dead that they should be judged is come also; and

shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God

that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants; the time for the latter had also come; Rev. xxii. 12. Did not the revelator look on all these things as taking place at the same time? We have shown that the nations were angry when God set his king upon his holy hill of Zion. The heathen raged; the people imagined a vain thing; Psal. ii. Christ was exalted to reign over and judge the nations, — to break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Some said, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" Luke xix. 14. They were angry. Jesus' wrath came upon them. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me;" Idem, 27. It was at the time of the exaltation of Christ to reign in power and glory upon his mediatorial throne, that he gave reward unto his servants and to the saints, and them that feared his name, small and great; it was then that he destroyed them who destroyed the land by their iniquities. The above argument is strengthened by the consideration, that God's judgments are in the earth. On this point the sacred writers are very explicit. "Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth;" Psal. lviii. 11. The Saviour said: "For judgment I am come into this world." Again, he said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" John ix. 39; compare John v. 22. Now, if God has committed all judgment unto the Son, and if Jesus came into this world to fulfil the high appointment of executing judgment, then the judgment must be in this world. Hence Jesus said, on another occasion, "Now is the judgment of this world;" John xii. 31. See, also, 1 Peter iv. 17, 18. The revelator says, "The great day of

was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament ; and there were

his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand?" vi. 17 ; and again, "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come ;" xiv. 7. All this agrees with what Solomon said, Prov. xi. 31.

19. *Temple of God was opened in heaven.*—From this verse we see that the old temple on Mount Zion was gone. The revelator saw that it had answered the purpose for which it was erected, and had been levelled with the dust. It shall be built no more. Here, for the first time in the Apocalypse, the temple is spoken of as being destroyed, demolished, gone. But as Paul showed the Hebrews that there was nothing good in Judaism which was not more than made up by Christianity, so the revelator, after having announced the fall of Judaism and the triumph of Christianity, and the demolition of the temple, showed that the Christians had a temple still. "The temple of God was opened in heaven." This is a manifest allusion to the passing away of the temple on Zion, and to its being succeeded by the spiritual or heavenly temple of the gospel. Jesus foretold that the time should come, in which men should cease to worship God on Gerizim or Zion, but should worship him (wherever they might be) in spirit and in truth. "The temple of God was opened in heaven." It was a heavenly, spiritual temple. All had access to it. In this spiritual temple was the ark of the new covenant. This covenant was written, not on tables of stone, nor on parchment, but in the minds and hearts of the people ; and Paul called it a *new* one, because the former had "waxed old and was ready to pass away;" Heb i. 10—13. ¶ *There were lightnings, and voices, &c.*—But all opposition to the gospel was not done. Wicked men would still oppose it ; though the

lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Son of man would ride forth conquering and to conquer ; and this ineffectual opposition, which was to continue for a time, is denoted by the "lightnings and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail."

Thus have we brought our commentary on the Apocalypse to the end of the 11th chapter, and to the conclusion of the *second great division of that book*. The 12th chapter will commence a subject entirely new, viz., the opposition to the Christian church by the power of Rome.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Preliminary Considerations.*—We come now to a new matter altogether. At the close of the 11th chapter we finished the account of the fall of Jerusalem, and the abolishing of the *first* covenant, and of the triumph of the gospel on the ruins of Judaism, the prophecies of which are contained in what we call the *second great division* of the Apocalypse. The 12th chapter (which we are now to consider) contains the beginning of the description of the persecution of the Christians by the pagan and civil power of the Roman Empire, and more especially of the city of Rome itself.

The 12th chapter commences the *second* prophecy. In chap. i. 3, the revelator said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of *this prophecy*, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand." The prophecy here referred to extended to the end of the 11th chapter ; and when the revelator was about to close up that prophecy, the angel said to him, "Thou must PROPHECY AGAIN, before [not the Jews only, but] many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," (x. 11,) referring to the nations and rulers of the Roman Empire. The mystery

## CHAPTER XII.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman

of God was finished when the *seventh* (or last) angel began to sound; x. 7; the sounding of the seventh angel is mentioned chap. xi. 15; and the events announced by the seventh trumpet are described from that verse to the end of the 11th chapter. So that the SECOND PROPHECY, or the prophecy concerning the Roman Empire, begins at the commencement of the 12th chapter.

It is now necessary, first of all, to remember, that the events of the 12th chapter are not consecutive in order of time to those described in the preceding chapters; but the *succeeding* portions of the Apocalypse double back, as to time, upon all the former parts of the book. In fact, we are not sure that the event with which the 12th chapter opens, is, of all the events in the Apocalypse, the earliest in point of time. John was to write things that *were past*, as well as those that *were future*. "Write the things which thou *hast seen*, and the things *which are*, and the things which *shall be hereafter*;" i. 19. The events described at the opening of the 12th chapter, are those which he *had seen*; they were not in the nature of a *prophecy*, but a *history*, written in a highly allegorical style. The events of the seventh trumpet are all described in chapter 11th. The *seventh* was the *last* trumpet, for we do not read of any further trumpet. There is no *eighth* or *ninth* trumpet. This shows us conclusively, that the series of events embraced in the seven trumpets are all described; that part of the Apocalypse is completed. The reader is directed to our remarks at the end of the tenth chapter. With this premonition, we are prepared to commence the exposition of the chapter.

1. *Great wonder in heaven.*—The Greek word here translated wonder,

clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars :

signifies sign, or metaphor. The woman which John saw, was a sign, or metaphor, of an extraordinary character. The scene was laid in the heavens, i. e., in the region of the sun, moon and stars. She had the moon under her feet, and consequently is described as being in heaven,—not the invisible dwelling-place of the Almighty,—but the apparent place of the heavenly bodies, the firmament. ¶ *A woman clothed with the sun.*—A woman, in metaphorical language, is used to signify a city, a nation, a state or body politic. This method of representing nations and cities under the symbol of women, was copied from the eastern by the western world. Rome has long been known under this figurative description. And we have all seen Britannia represented as a woman. Among the Roman coins is one of the Emperor Vespasian, on the reverse of which is a captive woman, hanging her mournful head, and the inscription is, *Judea*.—(Woodhouse.) How readily this brings to mind the words of Jeremiah: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits:" Lam. i. 1—3. There will be no doubt then in the reader's mind, that the Old Testament writers adopted the meta-

2 And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and

phor of a woman to represent a city, nation, or people. So Jerusalem was represented; and as that city is used as a figure of the holy city, New Jerusalem, or the gospel covenant, that covenant is represented in the same manner. See Isa. liv. 5, 6: "For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." St. Paul certainly borrows this figure from the very passage we have quoted from the prophet. He compared the two covenants to two women. These things, said he, "are an allegory." "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, *which is the mother of us all*;" Gal. iv. 25, 26. And then Paul proceeds to make a quotation from the very passage in Isaiah from which the above quotation was made. The new Jerusalem, or new covenant, then, is described as a woman, a *mother*. Those Jews who were converted to the gospel, were said to be born again, born of water and the spirit, the symbol of truth operating on the mind; and by a similar figure were said to be "children of the covenant," by whose power they were brought forth. "Ye are *the children* of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed;" Acts iii. 25. ¶ *Clothed with the sun*; — i. e., she had on a raiment of light. This figure too is derived from the prophets, for God is said to "cover himself with light as with a garment;" Ps. civ. 2. Hence he is said to be *a sun* and a shield, and to give grace and glory; lxxxiv. 11. The woman was adorned with

nothing earthly; she was arrayed in pure and heavenly light. ¶ *The moon under her feet*; — i. e., she was above all lesser lights; she was clothed with the sun, and therefore outshone all other orbs. Paul seems to represent the two covenants by the figures of the sun and moon. The old covenant was the lesser light. It had a glory before the appearance of the greater; but that glory was to be done away. The new covenant had a greater glory. "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth;" 2 Cor. iii. 9, 10. How beautifully, then, is the new covenant represented in "allegory," by "a woman, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." We cannot conceive of a finer metaphor. The revelator seems to have designed to express the precise idea conveyed by Paul in the quotation just made. The woman was the representative of the greatest moral light the world hath ever seen, or will see, viz., the covenant of the gospel; and hence she is described as being above the low condition of this *sub-luna* world. ¶ *A crown of twelve stars*. — What a crown, with stars as jewels! These doubtless represented the twelve apostles of the Lamb, who were afterwards to be called and appointed as ministers of the truth. Their names were to be written on the twelve foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem; xxi. 14. If the seven stars, in Rev. i. 20, are "the angels of the seven churches," so are the twelve stars, in the woman's crown, the twelve angels of the new covenant, or the twelve apostles.

2. *Travailing in birth*. — This is the same metaphor employed by Isaiah: "As soon as Zion [the name of the new covenant] travailed, she brought forth her children;" Isa. lxvi. 8

pained to be delivered.

### 3 And there appeared another

This is a further confirmation of the opinion expressed above, that the woman who travailed in birth represented the new covenant. For what is meant by *Zion* travelling? *Zion* certainly stands for the new covenant. We have shown already, that Paul regarded Sinai and Jerusalem from above as an allegory to represent "the two covenants;" Gal. iv. 24. *Zion* is but another name for the heavenly Jerusalem. Hence Paul says to the Hebrews, "Ye are come unto Mount *Zion*, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, \* \* \* and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant," &c; Heb. xii. 22—24. Taking, then, the accustomed use of figures by the sacred writers as our guide, we are surely led to the conclusion that the woman may represent *Zion* in travail, as expressed in Isa. lxvi. 8. Paul employs a like figure, when he says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you;" Gal. iv. 19. A like figure occurs in the following passage: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth;" Micah v. 2—4. How agreeable both to prophetic and apostolic usage, for the revelator to represent *Zion* as "travailing in birth and pained to be delivered."

3. *Another wonder in heaven.*—By this is meant that another remarkable

wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven

metaphor or sign appeared, up in the heavenly field where the revelator saw the woman clothed with the sun. ¶ *A great red dragon.*—This sign, or metaphor, was "a great red dragon, with seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads." The dragon was a fabulous animal, perhaps supposed by the ancients to have had an actual existence. It is thought by some to have been like a winged serpent, and by others like the crocodile. Be this as it may, there is no question that the dragon before us, like the woman clothed with the sun, is altogether allegorical. No such real animal ever existed, as is described in the verse before us. Having settled, then, that the dragon is allegorical, we must proceed to inquire what he represents. And, first, did the prophets use the dragon as a metaphor? and if so, what did they intend it to represent? This is the first time the word is used in the Apocalypse. Let us look into the Old Testament. In speaking of the way in which God wrought destruction upon his enemies, David said: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters;" Psal. lxxiv. 13. By "dragons" here seem to be meant the Egyptian hosts who pursued the children of Israel. The prophet describes God's enemies under the figure of a dragon, Isa. xxvii. 1: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." See also Isa. li. 9: "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, [Egypt,] and wounded the dragon?" Here the Egyptians, who pursued the Israelites to destroy them, are again represented under the metaphor of a dragon. Nebuchadnezzar was a dragon to the Jews. See Jer. li. 34: "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Baby-

heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

lon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out." The same figure is applied to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in Ezek. xxix. 3: "Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." Thus have we shown, indisputably, that by the figure of the dragon, the Old Testament writers were accustomed to represent powerful, cruel, crushing enemies. Of this there is no doubt; and the same sense shall we apply to the dragon before us. But *what enemy* is represented? We must determine that by his *heads* and *horns*. ¶ *Seven heads*.—In giving a description of mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots, [by which the city of Rome was doubtless meant,] the revelator says: "The seven heads [of the beast] are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;" xvii. 9. This is so direct an allusion to Rome, that there seems no danger of mistake. Rome, the seat of the imperial government, was "the seven-hilled city." Historians, geographers and poets, all speak of the city with seven hills; and passages might be quoted to this purpose without number and without end. But the seven heads of the dragon represented not merely the seven mountains on which the city stood, but also "seven kings;" xvii. 10; and hence it is said, that the dragon had "seven crowns upon his heads." It seems evident, then, that this great fire-colored (*purros*) dragon represented something appertaining to the Roman Empire. ¶ *Ten horns*.—And he not only had seven heads, but *ten horns*. Horns are emblems of power; and in the case before us they represent earthly

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and

rulers. Turn now to Rev. xvii. 12, for the explanation: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." And so, concerning the beast which Daniel saw in his vision, we are told: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise;" Dan. vii. 24. This, then, is the explanation which the sacred writers themselves give of this matter. The dragon was that power in the Roman Empire which was the first to persecute the Christians. Observe, that he did not rise out of the sea, like the beast mentioned in chap. xiii., which we shall consider largely when we come to that place; but he appeared as a sign, or wonder, *in heaven*. Perhaps John placed this scene in the firmament, and chose the figures principally from celestial objects, to denote that he was describing spiritual matters. If so, the dragon represented a *spiritual* power; and hence we infer it was Rome spiritual, or Rome in her religious character. It was *this* power of the empire which commenced the persecution of the Christians; and the dragon is the first emblem we find in the Apocalypse to represent Roman persecution. It is true the civil power was subsequently incited to the opposition; but Paganism was the inciting cause of the persecution. Hence the great fire-colored dragon appears in the description before the beast, [the secular power,] mentioned in chap. xiii. Christ came to overthrow *Paganism*; but he did not come to overthrow the government of the empire. Paganism, therefore, under the figure of the dragon, is first represented as seeking to crush Christ. But let us attend further to the description of the dragon.

4. *His tail drew a third part of the stars*.—The object here is to set forth the extraordinary power of the dragon. In chap. ix. 17—19, we found a highly figurative description of the cavalry

did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be

of the Roman army. The horses breathed fire and smoke and brimstone ; and their tails were like serpents, having heads. The sole intent in that passage seems to have been to represent the horses to be as fearful as possible. So, to represent the dragon's power, it is said, "his tail drew a third part of the stars." The dragon, if he represented the spiritual power of Rome, or paganism, would, of course, have great influence among the rulers of the empire ; they would be more or less under his guidance ; and all who have learned of the immense power of heathen priests, know that they could almost make and unmake rulers at their pleasure. They had means of guiding public sentiment and controlling the public will. Such a power in the dragon, would be well described by his drawing after him the stars of heaven. John had placed the scene in the firmament, among the stars. He showed the dragon's power, therefore, by representing him as drawing the stars. The metaphor, perhaps, was suggested by the passage in Daniel : "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven : and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them ;" viii. 10. Daniel meant by stars Jewish rulers. The dragon was represented as very powerful ; he had immense influence. It would seem to require great power to strike the stars out of their places. *Star* stands, in the metaphorical language of the Bible, for a ruler, an eminent person, as we saw in treating of the angels of the churches ; i. 20. This dragon had power to draw many of the rulers after him. When men are drawn away by bad influences, they are compared to "wandering stars ;" Jude 13. To cast the stars down from heaven to the earth is to degrade men, — to throw them down from

delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a

their high stations. So Isaiah says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ;" xiv. 12. The dragon had power to cause many to fall from their high estate of purity and faithfulness. ¶ *To devour her child.* — It will be seen that this was the great object of the dragon, — his first and most earnest purpose. And he desired to accomplish it speedily. He watched for the child that was about to be born, that he might devour it

5. *Brought forth a man-child.* — This is one of the most interesting verses in the whole chapter. The prophet said, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel ;" Isa. vii. 14. A "man-child" was born. Is not this the man-child brought forth by Zion, and mentioned in Isa. lxvi ? At any rate the figures are similar : "Before she travailed, she brought forth ; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing ? who hath seen such things ? shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day ? or shall a nation be born at once ? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children ;" verses 7, 8, of the chapter mentioned. ¶ *Rule all nations with a rod of iron.* — This man-child was "to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Who is this but the Christ ? God says of his Son, whom he had begotten : "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron," &c. ; Ps. ii. 8, 9 ; Rev. ii. 26, 27 ; xix. 15. It seems difficult to avoid the thought that the revelator had his mind on this passage in the 2d Psalm, when he said that the man-child "was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." ¶ *Unto God and his throne.* — This may signify that God took Jesus

man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

under his peculiar protection; and that he was safe from all that God did not design that he should suffer, as if he had been caught up to God and his throne; or it may signify that Jesus, at his death, was taken up to heaven to sit down at the right hand of God. Jesus and his religion was the continued object of persecution, all over the Roman empire, wherever it was preached. His death was no hindrance to the propagation of his religion, but rather a great help to it. So signal a display of divine power was it in God, to cause the wrath of man to praise him, that even when the powers of earth succeeded to kill him, the hand of God was in it, and God was said to have "caught him up to his throne." We know that Herod, the Roman governor, sought to slay the infant Jesus almost as soon as he was born; and his mother was obliged to flee away with him into Egypt, where she remained until Herod died; Matt. ii. 12—20. But we have said God "caught him up to his throne;" and there the revelator saw him. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb," &c.; v. 6. Hence the throne is called from that time "the throne of God and the Lamb." The Son, from the time that the Father caught him up to his throne, was safe in heaven. Persecution could no more assail him, and accordingly we read no more of his being persecuted. But persecutions still continued. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with *the remnant* of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ;" verse 17. The members of the church on earth still suffered under the wrath of the dragon.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a

6. *The woman fled into the wilderness.* — It is not necessary to suppose that the woman fled into the wilderness after her child was caught up to the throne of God; but after the birth. The sense may be as follows: And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was [subsequently, viz., at his resurrection] caught up unto God and his throne. But the woman, the mother, fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God. In this case it is possible the revelator referred to Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, who, as we have seen, fled with her son into Egypt. It is by no means certain, however, that this is the true interpretation. It may signify the retirement of the believers into obscure places, in consequence of the raging persecutions. The Hebrews used the word which we translate wilderness, to signify all places that were not cultivated, but which were chiefly destined to the feeding of cattle, and on which trees grew wild. So when wilderness is mentioned in Scripture, we are not always to imagine it to be a place forsaken, abandoned, void of cities, or inhabitants; as this word often represents the soil near a city, or village, which was appointed for a pasture, and where the plough never came. Thus, in Scripture, there are few cities which had not their wilderness, i. e., uncultivated places for woods or pastures. We need not suppose, therefore, that the Christians all rushed to one and the same place; but they resorted to obscure retreats, in the times of the greatest danger. They fled at times from one place to another, as their Master told them to do; Matt. x. 23. So Paul went from Amphipolis to Apollonia, thence to Thessalonica,

thousand two hundred and threescore days.

thence to Berea, and thence to Athens. The Christians were not required to sacrifice their lives uselessly and rashly. They were to flee before persecution, and live and preach as long as they could, and as long as it was God's will. But they were never to hold life dearer than the cause of Christ, and were never to renounce the latter to save the former. ¶ *A thousand two hundred and threescore days.*—The revelator merely touches upon the persecution of the woman in this place; and, intending to resume it again, he passes hastily to the subject mentioned in the next verse. The persecution of the woman is resumed, ver. 13. By the thousand two hundred and threescore days is meant the time of the church's depression, and the triumph of the persecuting power, as we have shown under xi. 2, 3. It is the same season that is referred to in ver. 14, as a time, times, and half a time. This is made certain by a comparison of ver. 6 with ver. 14.

7. *There was war in heaven.*—War is put for *spiritual contests* in the Scriptures. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds," &c., &c.; 2 Cor. x. 3, 4. Paul charged Timothy "to war a good warfare;" 1 Tim. i. 28; again he tells him to "endure hardness as a good *soldier* of Jesus Christ;" and that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a *soldier*;" 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. And he says, in the same epistle "I have fought a *good fight*, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" iv. 7. There can be no doubt that *war* is often put in the Scriptures for spiritual contests. The Christian is a "soldier," and Christ

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels

is "the captain of our salvation." This war may be said to have been in heaven perhaps for two reasons. 1st. John had laid the scene of these transactions in the firmament, the field of the sun, moon and stars. The dragon was introduced first of all in that field. The war certainly was metaphorical. The whole account is of that nature. No such events actually took place among the stars. The scene was laid there in the revelator's imagination. War in heaven may also signify a spiritual contest. This is the only place in the Bible in which that expression occurs. It was the contest, says Sir Isaac Newton, between "the Christian and heathen religions;" and we quote the words as expressing the idea, which, in our view, the revelator intended to convey. ¶ *Michael and his angels.*—The inquiry will now arise, who was Michael? He was an imaginary leader of the Christian forces, as the dragon, that old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, (for these four terms all signify the same thing,) was the imaginary leader of the opposition. Michael is mentioned in the books of Daniel, Jude and the Apocalypse. In Daniel the name seems to be applied to one of the chief princes of Persia, an amiable and excellent personage, who succored Daniel and the Jews, while they were in captivity, and rendered them very essential service; see chap. x. 13, 21. From this fact his name came to be used metonymically for the guardian of good men, who would protect the Christians in the time of their troubles, as he had protected the Jews in their captivity; Dan. xii. 1. In the figurative language of Jude, he is called an archangel, who had contended with the devil, (i. e., the opponents,) about the body of Moses, a figure to represent the Jewish church in captivity, just as the body of Christ presents the

fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither

Christian church. See Eph. i. 22, 23: "Gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Col. i. 24: "For his body's sake, which is the church." 1 Cor. xii. 27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Michael, in metaphor, being spoken of as the guardian of the Jewish church, (metonymically, "the body of Moses,") so is he spoken of, in the same sense, as the guardian of the Christian church; and he contended with the dragon, or devil, about the body of Christ, or the church. Hence came the battle, or spiritual contest, between "Michael and his angels," and "the dragon and his angels."

¶ *The dragon fought and his angels.* — We have given some account of the dragon under ver. 3. The dragon was the metaphorical leader of the opposition to Christianity, precisely as Michael was of the Christian forces. The spiritual contest is described under the metaphor of earthly warfare; and therefore the spiritual forces are described under the metaphor of earthly forces. Neither Michael nor the dragon was a real being. Michael and his forces were the Christian forces; the dragon and his forces were the heathen powers, that opposed and persecuted the Christians. The dragon, the old serpent, the devil and Satan, are all used to signify the leading opposers of Christianity. The great fact to be remembered in this place is, that this account of the contest is wholly allegorical, and describes the opposition between Christianity and heathenism.

8. *Prevailed not.* — This is as we should expect. God's truth cannot be overcome. The Christian religion prevailed in spite of all the opposition that was arrayed against it; and the opposition could not prevail. It had numbers, wealth, learning, and

was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was

prejudice to aid it; but it could not prevail. ¶ *Neither was their place found any more in heaven.* — The dragon was degraded, thrown down from his high place. John, having laid the scene of the contest in the firmament, thus gave himself a fine opportunity to describe the degradation of the dragon, by his being precipitated to the earth. Instead of succeeding in his attempt, the dragon was even further removed from the power of accomplishing it.

9. *The great dragon was cast out.* — The dragon prevailed not; he was beaten. He was cast out of heaven; i. e., he was cast down from his place of spiritual power. The Christian religion was successful. When the seventy disciples returned to Jesus on a certain occasion, and told him of their great successes, he foresaw the ultimate triumph of his truth over all opposition, and he described the fall of that opposition in these words: — "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven;" i. e. from his high power. I beheld, and saw him cast down. The same figure was used to describe the fall of the king of Babylon from his throne. Isa. xiv. 12—15: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! — For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." To be cast out of heaven into the earth was to be abased, — to be thrown down from high power and influence to weakness and degradation. The battle of Michael and the dragon was a visionary scene. It

cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which

existed only in the imagination of St. John; though the circumstances intended to be described were realities. See our extract from Doddridge in our note on chapter iv. 4. Bishop Newton, we think, gives the best construction of the contest between Michael and the dragon: "This contest lasted several years, and the final issue of it was, that the Christian prevailed over the heathen religion; the heathen were deposed from al. rule and authority, and the Christians were advanced to dominion and empire in their stead." The Christian religion prevailed among the leading men of the empire. There is not the slightest evidence that by "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," any other than earthly powers were intended. It is high time that all the old superstitions in regard to a super-human adversary passed away. That the devil stood for the earthly opponents of the Christians is certain; for it is said, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison," Rev. ii. 10; and of course, the power that cast the Christians into prison was intended by the devil. That power was unquestionably the leading opponents of the church, against whom the Christians had to contend. Paul said to the Ephesians, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of THE DEVIL;" vi. 11; and then he shows who they were to contend with, in the next words: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." These rulers, these principalities, these powers, were *diabolos*, the devil, that old serpent, and Satan. The final and utter overthrow of the dragon is mentioned in Rev. xx. 1—3 and 7—10, to which places we refer for further remarks on this topic. We take the opportunity here to say, if the dragon

of the Apocalypse signifies anything besides human adversaries, it is the only instance in the Bible in which it has such a signification. We find the dragon mentioned Ps. xci. 13: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." Is any other than a human adversary intended here? Is not this the meaning of the passage—thou shalt triumph over all thine enemies, even the most formidable? Are not the lion, the adder, the young lion, the dragon, all put for earthly enemies? Why should the dragon be supposed to refer to a super-human adversary any more than the lion, or the adder? The dragon is mentioned again, Isa. xxvii. 1: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." What is meant here by the dragon that is in the sea? Was it any other than a human adversary? Adam Clarke, speaking of the animals mentioned in this verse, says: "These are used allegorically, without doubt, for great potentates, enemies and persecutors of the people of God; but to specify the particular persons or states designed by the prophet under these images, is a matter of great difficulty, and comes not necessarily within the design of these notes. R. D. Kimchi says, leviathan is a parable concerning the kings of the Gentiles; it is the largest fish in the sea, called also *tannin*, the dragon, or rather the whale. By these names the Grecian, Turkish and Roman empires are intended. The dragon of the sea seems to mean some nation having a strong naval force and extensive commerce.—See Kimchi on the place." So far A. Clarke. We here have the Jewish use of the metaphor. It signified earthly opposers and oppressors. The next in stance in the common version in

deceive the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and

his angels were cast out with him.

which mention is made of the dragon is Isaiah li. 9, 10: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord: awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" This is an apostrophe to the arm of the Lord. It is called on to awake as in the ancient days, and refers to the wounding of Rahab [Egypt] and the wounding of the dragon [Egyptian forces.] This took place when Israel passed through the Red Sea. Hence the reference to the drying of the sea, and making the depths thereof a way for the ransomed [from bondage] to pass over. Dragon here, then, means human adversaries, and none other. The next quotation we make is the following: "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicacies, he hath cast me out;" Jer. li. 34. By the dragon here, it is so plain that Nebuchadnezzar, the enemy and oppressor of the Jews, is intended, that no remarks of our own will make this more apparent. We see, then, that as yet we have not found an instance in which the dragon signified anything other than a human adversary or oppressor. We quote only one passage more: "Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself;" Ezek. xxix. 3. This passage is too plain to be misunderstood. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is expressly said to be the great dragon that lieth in the midst

of his rivers. We have thus noticed every passage in the Bible, with the exception of the book of Revelation, in which the dragon is mentioned in the singular number. Those who wish to examine the places in which the word occurs in the plural, are referred to the following; Deut. xxxii. 33; Job xxx. 29; Psal. xlv. 19; lxxiv. 13; cxlviii. 7; Isa. xiii. 22; xxxiv. 13; xliii. 20; Jer. ix. 11; x. 22; xiv. 6; xlix. 33; li. 37; Micah i. 8; Mal. i. 3. Now in none of these places will it be contended that the dragon signifies, when used metaphorically, any other than human adversaries or oppressors. We get no authority, then, from the Bible, for supposing that the sacred writers use the dragon as a metaphor for a spiritual, invisible, superhuman spirit, or adversary. Such a use of the metaphor is against the general scriptural use. Why should we introduce a different rule of interpretation when we come to the book of Revelation? We do not wonder that men have been unable to understand this book, if they have made an entirely different application of scriptural metaphors, in interpreting it, from that which they have adopted in interpreting all other parts of the Bible. We hold that it is sound and just, in interpreting the Apocalypse, to follow the general drift of the sacred writers in the application of metaphors. If we will not do this, but submit ourselves to the direction of mere prejudice or fancy, we must expect to go astray. But in respect to the dragon, we claim not only the *general*, but the *universal* authority and use of the sacred writers, to show that it signifies human enemies and oppressors. We have named every passage where the word occurs; and we cannot, we ought not, to depart, in applying the metaphor in the Apocalypse, from the universal scriptural use. ¶ *His*

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the

power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night.

*angels were cast out with him.*—If anything more than mere imagery is meant here, then by the angels of the dragon may very naturally be intended his forces,—his ministers,—his supporters. The dragon signified the leading, persecuting, ecclesiastical power of Rome; and his angels were the leading men and emissaries who abetted that power.

10. *Now is come salvation and strength.*—The dragon and his angels having been cast out, we now come to the hymn of the triumph of Christianity,—the hymn of triumph for the prevalence of Christianity over Paganism. “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.” This is the common language in the New Testament to signify the prevalence and triumph of gospel principles. Wherever the gospel prevailed, salvation was said to come. When Simeon saw the babe Christ, he said: “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;” Luke ii. 30. When Jesus entered the house of Zaccheus, it was said: “This day is salvation come to this house;” xix. 9. “The kingdom of God is come unto you;” Matt. xii. 28. “Salvation is come unto the Gentiles;” Rom. xi. 11. When the kingdom of God was fully established, Jesus was said to come with power; Matt. xxiv. 30; for “all power was given unto him in heaven and on earth;” xxviii. 18; he had “power over all flesh;” John xvii. 2. The power of Christ is acknowledged in this song, as the power of God was acknowledged, chap. iv. 11; and of Christ, ch. v. 12, 13; xix. 1—6. ¶ *The accuser is cast down.*—One of the most common manifestations of a hostile spirit is to bring false accusations. The word *diabolos*, *devil*, signifies a false accu-

ser, and is so translated; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3. How agreeable, therefore, to the enemy, *diabolos*, to bring false accusations against the followers of Christ. The Jews continually brought false accusations against the apostles, and so did the Gentile opponents, when the gospel came to be preached among them. Jesus forewarned his disciples of this feature of the opposition they would be obliged to meet;” Matt. v. 11, 12: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” The accusation was said to be made before God, because it was observed by him; not that the accusation was made to him, for the heathen would scarcely have gone to the true God, whom they knew not, and much less with an accusation against his servants. When it was said, “The earth was corrupt before God,” Gen. vi. 11, the meaning was, that it was corrupt in his sight, and that he took special notice of it. Paul spake of the world becoming guilty before God; Rom. iii. 19; meaning guilty in his sight. So the accuser, who was cast down, accused the Christians falsely in the sight of God. The enemies were *diaboloi*, false accusers, and are called by that name in the preceding verse. Let us turn now to behold the means by which the conquest was obtained.

11. *Blood of the Lamb—word of their testimony.*—Thus we see by what means the gospel prevailed, viz., by the “blood of the Lamb,” which is explained to be “the word of their testimony.” “The blood of Jesus Christ” is said to “cleanse from all sin;” 1 John i. 7; but blood surely

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;

is not to be taken here in the literal sense. In that sense what effect could the blood of Christ exert to save men from sin? Under the Jewish law, without the shedding of the blood of animals, there was no remission of sin; Heb. ix. 32; and from this circumstance the New Testament writers were led to use the blood of Christ as a metaphor. Jesus did not offer the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, which is said to "purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God;" verses 12—14. He himself shall explain the metaphor of his blood. See John vi. 55, 56: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." When the Jews heard this, they thought it was a hard saying. Jesus then asked them, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" That is, if you find it difficult to understand what is meant by eating my flesh and drinking my blood now, when my body is present with you, what will you do when my body is removed by my ascension into glory? He then showed them that he did not use the words in the literal sense, for he added: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; THE WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life;" vi. 63. It was not blood in the literal sense that gave them life, but blood standing as an emblem of *the word of God*. And thus it is said in the verse before us, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by THE WORD of their testimony." See the notes on i. 5; v. 9; vii. 14. ¶ *And they loved not their lives.*—This was true of the early Christians. It was one of the conditions of discipleship, that a man should love Christ's cause more than his own life; Luke xiv.

and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye

26. The early Christians were not required to throw their lives away; they were to live as long as they could do good, and to die when the cause of truth required it. The word *psuche*, here translated life or *lives*, is sometimes, in the common version, translated *soul*, as in Matt. xvi. 25, 26: "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Who would suppose that the same Greek word occurred in both these last quoted verses? And yet it is so; and it is rendered *life* in the former and *soul* in the latter. Does it not mean life in both verses, as it does in the passage now before us? We have shown, that the Christians were required to love their lives less than they loved Christ's truth. If a man loved father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, wife, children, or even his own life, more than he loved Christ, he was not worthy of him. The early Christians, therefore, loved not their lives unto the death; i. e., they ceased to love life when the alternative was presented them of apostacy or death. Christ was more precious to them than the preservation of their lives.

12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens.*—That is, rejoice at the triumph of Christianity. At the establishment of the kingdom of God, the heavens were called on by the prophets to rejoice. "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice," &c.; Ps. xvi. 10, 11. Again: "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted

heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted;" Isa. xlix. 13. This address to the heavens is one of the accustomed apostrophes of the inspired writers. ¶ *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth.*—This was a prediction, not a desire. The inhabitants of the earth [or land] and sea, meant people of different classes. They were called to mourning, for the devil had come down unto them, having great wrath. ¶ *The devil.*—And who is meant here by the devil? Ans. The dragon who had been cast out of heaven into the earth. He was "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan." In the verse before us, we find him under the name *ho diabolos*, the devil. John having represented the imaginary field of contest in the firmament, the discomfiture of the devil is represented as his falling from his high place. He is ejected; he loses his place; he falls like a lost star, to the earth,—the earth being opposite, in the view of the revelator, to the firmament. He had great wrath. This he had shown by seeking to devour the man-child, and also by fighting with Michael and his angels, in which contest, as we have stated, he was beaten. ¶ *Short time.*—He had but a short time to oppose the church; the time of his overthrow was near, as described verse 9, which proves that the overthrow of the power described by "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," was not far off. The final destruction of the dragon is treated of in chap. xx. 1—3, 7—10. The reader must examine the notes on those places; also what has been said on the 9th

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great

verse of this chapter. All that oppose the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ may be sure to be overthrown. The truth will prevail; and all opposition, however strong at first, will be thrown down.

13. *He persecuted the woman.*—He raged the more fiercely, when he saw that he had begun to lose power, and that his entire overthrow was near. What more enrages an enemy, what makes him more desperate, than to begin to lose power? When, therefore, the heathen power began to see its decline, when it saw Christianity working itself into the hearts of the people, it sought to vent its rage upon the church. The Son of God it could not persecute; he had been caught up to God and to his throne, ver. 5; but the religion of Jesus and his followers were persecuted still. The heathen powers of Rome, as we all know, persecuted the Christian church after the ascension of Jesus; and continued to persecute it, until their influence was broken in the empire, and Rome pagan was transformed to Rome Christian.

14. *Two wings of a great eagle.*—The facts here are a repetition of those stated in the 6th verse. 1st. The woman fled into the wilderness. 2d. To the place prepared for her. 3d. To be succored there twelve hundred and sixty days, or a time, times, and half a time, which we have shown mean the same thing. Compare verses 6 and 14. The church was faithful; she waited upon the Lord; and those "that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; and they shall run and not be weary, and

eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a

they shall walk and not faint;" Isa. xl. 31. This figure of the woman flying away into the *wilderness* on *eagles'* wings, is taken from the account of the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. We have already shown that Pharaoh had been described under the figure of a dragon by the prophets. The revelator drew a large number of his metaphors from the early history of his own nation. See Exod. xix. 1—4: "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the *wilderness* of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the *wilderness*; and there Israel encamped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on *eagles'* wings, and brought you unto myself." Thus was represented the escape of Israel from Egyptian bondage; and how natural, therefore, for the revelator to describe the church when fleeing from persecution, as flying on the wings of eagles into the wilderness. Nothing is more common in our day than to describe deliverance from darkness, danger and unbelief, by being brought out of Egypt. The state of unbelief is represented by Egyptian darkness, in the language of Christians, to this time. The state of faith and joy is represented by the land of Canaan. We see, then, that the revelator employed, in some cases, metaphors which are now in familiar use; but which were more striking in his case, as he was a Jew, and addressed those who were very famil-

iar with Jewish sacred history. For further illustrations of this verse, see the note on verse 6th.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood,

15. *Serpent cast out of his mouth.*—

The metaphor is very unnatural here, for no serpent has power to cast a flood of water from his mouth. Some serpents (says Prof. Stuart) are said to eject from their mouths a poisonous bile when they are enraged, in order to annoy their enemy. Or is the metaphor taken for the spouting forth of large quantities of water by some of the sea monsters? By the serpent, the dragon is doubtless intended, for he was "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan;" all these terms signifying the same thing. Compare verses 15 and 16. The Hebrew word translated dragon in the Old Testament is used with much latitude, and sometimes seems to denote a crocodile, a whale, or other large sea animal. The dragon, in John's vision, had, in the first place, been seen in the firmament, seeking to devour the child. Here he makes war with Michael, the imaginary guardian angel of the Christians; is beaten, and thrown down from heaven to the earth. His wrath still continues, and rather increases, because, from his fall, he sees that his time is short. He persecutes the woman, and she is provided with remarkable means of escape, and flies away into the wilderness from the face, or presence, of the serpent. It is not said the serpent followed her into the wilderness; the contrary seems to be implied. He could not go there; and the woman, by going there, got away from his presence. He seems to have used his best means of attack, to prevent her escape,—he "cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the

after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast

out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

flood." This figure is natural enough, if we suppose by the dragon was meant some huge sea monster; and the word translated dragon, as we have said, certainly sometimes has that application. The metaphor may be understood in the manner here denoted, or it may be understood on the same principle we applied to the fire, smoke and brimstone, coming out of the horses' nostrils, or mouths, ix. 17, 18, and the tails, with heads like serpents, 19, as mere imagery to represent the fearful power of the cavalry. If the imagery of the Apocalypse in some cases be unnatural, we must look at the intent of it. If the serpent casting water out of his mouth like a flood be an unnatural metaphor, the intent of it is easily seen. It showed his continued opposition to the woman, — his last efforts to destroy her. Lowman says: — "Floods and inundations often come so suddenly and with such violence, as to drown or carry away all things within their reach, and give no time for an escape. They are a proper figure to express some great and sudden danger. Nahum thus describes the judgments of God, which shall utterly destroy his enemies; i. 8: 'But with an overflowing flood, he will make an utter end of the place thereof.' So that by this similitude of the serpent casting a flood out of his mouth, we may well understand some quick and smart attempts of the enemies of true religion to cut off all hope of safety for the true worshippers of God, even in retirement."

16. *The earth helped the woman.* — How? By the power of God. He caused caverns to be opened to receive

the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. It was an old axiom among the faithful in the house of Israel, that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" Isa. lix. 19. This verse expresses the sense of the passage before us. The enemy came in like a flood, and God interposed a barrier to his success, — he caused a cavern to be opened in the earth to swallow up the waters.

17. *Wroth with the woman.* — The heathen power was angry that it could not destroy the gospel. It had used its utmost energies to do it, and had failed. Foiled in every attempt, it is not to be wondered at that the dragon was wroth; but as his opposition had failed to destroy the woman, and also the man-child who had been caught up to the throne of God, he "went to make war with the remnant of her seed." And who these were, we infer from the description, that they were those "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It is certain that the faithful believers are here described. They were the objects of the dragon's vengeance as long as his power lasted.

In the next chapter we shall find an account of a beast, resembling in some respects the dragon, but also differing in important particulars. The great red dragon appeared in heaven, the beast rose out of the sea. The former represented the Roman empire in its spiritual or heathen character, — the latter, the same empire in its civil or secular state.

## CHAPTER XIII.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast

## CHAPTER XIII.

We have contemplated, in the preceding chapter, the Roman empire, in its religious or pagan character, under the figure of "a great red dragon," with seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns. In the chapter now to be examined, the same empire is set forth in its civil or political character, not under the figure of a dragon, (*Dracon*,) but under the figure of a beast, (*Therion*.) There is such a similarity between the description of the dragon and the beast, that they must both have reference to the Roman empire; and yet is there such a difference in the description as to show that precisely the same thing is not in both cases intended.

1. *I stood upon the sand of the sea.* — That is, I took my position upon the sand of the sea-shore; or I was placed there in order to behold the further revelation that was to be made to me. The former vision had been in the firmament; this is to be on the sea, or to rise up out of the sea. ¶ *Saw a beast rise up out of the sea.* — Now observe, there is nothing said here about "a wonder in heaven," as in the case of the dragon. The beast "rose up out of the sea," or as it is expressed in another place, the bottomless pit, or abyss; xi. 7; xvii. 8; and did not appear as a wonder in heaven, or a spiritual wonder. Waters of the sea we know are used in the Apocalypse to represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;" xvii. 15: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." When John thus explains his own metaphor, we need look no further for the true sense. The beast that rose out of the

rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns,

sea, or the abyss, rose up from among the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues, and doubtless was the empire in its secular form. This beast, like the dragon, had seven heads, denoting Rome, the seat of the power of the empire. It had also, like the dragon, ten horns, showing a further likeness. Who can doubt that the dragon and the beast represent the same power, in different characters?

Let us look for a moment at the prophetic use of the metaphor. What did the prophets intend by a beast? In Daniel's vision, chap. vii., we read that four great beasts [*Theria* in the lxx.] rose up out of the sea, i. e., rose up from among the multitudes of the people. And they were not like the dragon and the beast in Revelation, viz., much alike, but they were "diverse one from another;" ver. 3. The first was like a lion; ver. 4; the second was like a bear; ver. 5; the third was like a leopard; ver. 6; and the fourth was "dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong, and it had ten horns," &c.; ver. 7. In explaining these figures Daniel expressly says: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth;" ver. 17. Beasts, wild and ferocious in their character, are used to represent earthly kings, or kingdoms. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces;" ver. 23. This must be the Roman empire, for no other ever had such wide dominion. Hence Daniel's beast, like that of the Apocalypse, had ten horns, which he explains to be "ten kings that shall arise;" ver. 24. The four kingdoms, represented in the 7th of Daniel by the four

and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

beasts, are represented in the second chapter of that prophecy by the different parts of the great image, the legs and the feet thereof being of iron, and representing the *fourth kingdom*, which was as strong as iron. But as the Roman Empire was composed of heterogeneous materials, so the feet of the image were in part of iron and part of clay, which showed the divisions of the kingdom, and the cause of its fall. Now, it was when the Roman Empire was in its fullest glory that Christ appeared to establish his spiritual kingdom; and Daniel therefore says: "*In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever;*" ii. 44. This kingdom, which the God of heaven set up, was the kingdom of Christ, represented not by a wild beast, but by the "stone cut out without hands," (i. e., without earthly aid, as Christ's spiritual kingdom was built up; Heb. ix. 11;) and if the reader will compare carefully the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel, he will see that it was the intention of that prophet to show, that Christianity was to arise in the time of the fourth kingdom, terrible and powerful, which was the Roman Empire. Then Christianity did arise; and without any manifest aid from men, it prevailed over all human opposition, and shall stand forever.

Who, then, can entertain a doubt, that the beast having ten horns, in the Apocalypse, is the same metaphor with the beast having ten horns, in Daniel? Who can doubt that the author of the Apocalypse had his eye on Daniel's metaphor when he drew his own figure? ¶ *Seven heads.*—By the seven heads the revelator may have intended the seven hills, on which the city of Rome (the seat of

the imperial power) was established; and he also symbolized by them seven particular kings, or emperors, whom he had in his mind. We follow not our own fancy in these matters, but the indications which were put forth by the revelator himself. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space;" Rev. xvii. 9, 10. ¶ *Ten horns.*—A horn, as is perceived at the first thought, is the agent of power. All animals who are furnished with horns, find them to be their means of defence. Hence the horn is used as a metaphor of power. The dragon, mentioned in the preceding chapter, had seven heads and ten horns, the same as the beast before us had; and unquestionably represented the same thing under a different form. But on the presumption that the dragon signified an invisible, intangible, spiritual adversary, commonly called the devil, what do his seven heads and ten horns mean? Is it proper to suppose that the seven heads and ten horns of the dragon signify certain things, and the seven heads and ten horns of the beast things entirely different? Prof. Stuart supposes the beast, with his seven heads and ten horns, to signify the Roman Empire; but the dragon, with the same number of heads and horns, he interprets to mean the devil, after the form of his own creed. That sound writer was sadly hampered, in his interpretation of the book of Revelation, by his creed; and we are not to wonder at this, since he is obliged, once in five years, to give a renewed affirmation of his belief in it. By the ten horns of the beast we think were intended ten kings. See the following: "And the ten horns which thou sawest.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his

feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a

are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast;" Rev. xvii. 12. This is further confirmed by the fact, that upon each horn was a crown; as though the revelator wished to say, these horns represent kings. ¶ *And upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*—The idea seems to be, that each head bore a frontlet, on which was inscribed a blasphemous title, i. e., an honorary name for the emperors, as if he had said, a name which derogated from the honor and glory of the true God. The source of the imagery here is probably to be sought for in the custom of persons who held distinguished offices having some name, significant of office, rank or duty, engraved upon the frontlets of their mitres or diadems. In the Apocalypse the promise is repeatedly given, that faithful Christians shall be made kings and priests to God; they were to have a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, &c.; Rev. ii. 17; that is, they were to be furnished with a diadem, such as kings and priests are wont to wear. It is certain that the statues of the Roman emperors had inscriptions on them that belong only to God. Divine honors were paid to them, and especially after their death. From facts like these, the beast is represented as having some blasphemous title on each of his heads.—(Stuart on xiii. 1.)

2. *Like unto a leopard, &c.*—Here again is a proof that the revelator drew his figure from Daniel; for Daniel's four beasts were, first, a lion; second, a bear; third, a leopard; and the fourth, a sort of indescribable animal, partaking of the qualities of all. And hence the revelator says, that the beast he saw rise from the sea, (Daniel's beasts all rose from the sea; vii. 3, 4.) was like unto a leopard, a bear, and a lion. He

seemed to combine the strength and ferocity of all. The leopard has great agility; the bear's strength is in his feet and legs; the lion's is in his mouth; and well said Daniel, therefore, that the "fourth beast was dreadful and terrible, and *strong exceedingly*, and it had *great iron teeth*;" vii. 7; or, "the mouth of a lion." There will be no longer any dispute, that the fourth beast in Daniel's vision is the beast of the Apocalypse; and as Daniel's fourth beast arose at the time of the establishment of Christianity, vii. 13, 14, 22—27, and as the Roman Empire was then in its highest and most glorious condition, there can be no doubt that the beast of the Apocalypse represents the Roman Empire in its secular power. ¶ *The dragon gave him his power, &c.*—In what sense did the dragon, or the priestly pagan influence, give power to the beast, the secular authority? It is a fact too notorious to be for one moment denied, that false spiritual teachers have always given strength to those secular rulers, however corrupt, who winked at their iniquities and interfered not with their designs. In the history of the Jews this fact is distinctly seen. The false priests exerted their power to keep the people in subjection to bad rulers. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. v. 30, 31. The prophets uttered lies, and the priests ruled the people, indirectly perhaps, and the people were so infatuated and deceived that they loved the oppression. The manner in which the iniquity of priests served to sustain the wickedness of secular rulers, is set forth by Micah, iii. 10—12, as follows: "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with

lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

### 3 And I saw one of his heads

iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." That corrupt governments have been sustained by false doctrines, promulgated by priests and philosophers, is acknowledged by credible historians. Polybius, for instance, an ancient Greek historian, tells us plainly that "since the multitude is ever fickle and capricious, full of lawless passions and irrational and violent resentments, there is no way left to keep them in order, but by the terrors of future punishment and all the pompous circumstance that attends such kind of fiction. On which account, the ancients acted, in my opinion, with great judgment and penetration, when they contrived to bring in those notions of the gods and a future state into the popular belief." Strabo, another Greek writer, speaks to the same purpose. "It is impossible," he says, "to govern women, and the gross body of the people, and to keep them pious, holy and virtuous, by the precepts of philosophy: this can only be done by the fear of the gods, which is raised and supported by ancient fictions and modern prodigies." He tells us further, that the "apparatus of the ancient mythologies" was "an engine which the legislators employed as bugbears to strike a terror into the childish imagination of the multitude." See the work of Rev. Thos. J. Sawyer, entitled, "Endless Punishment, its Origin and Grounds Examined," p. 22. The

as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.

priestly pagan power of Rome sustained the secular arm, by means of the false doctrines, the awful rites, the terrible mysteries; and in this way, if in no other, "the dragon gave the beast his power, and his seat, and *great authority*" over the people. Such a construction of this passage is consistent with fact, and makes unity. No man can fail to see that the Roman power is intended both by the dragon (chap. xii.) and the beast, (chap. xiii.) with some circumstances of dissimilarity. The pagan power of the empire is put first, because it rose up first against Christianity; and the support which the pagan power gave the secular is described in the verse before us.

3. *One of his heads as it were wounded to death.*—The beast, we have seen, had seven heads, ver. 1. The same was true of the dragon; xii. 3. One of the heads of the beast was wounded to death, a hyperbole, perhaps, for a very severe wound. This undoubtedly describes some calamity that fell upon the government of the empire, in one of its sections, which was afterwards repaired. One of the heads was severely wounded and afterwards healed. If these seven heads represent seven kings, (as we should be led to think from chap. xvii. 10,) then the wounding of one of the heads would refer to some calamity of one of these kings, which he subsequently recovered from. That it was some disaster suffered by violence, is apparent from verse 14, where the wound is said to have been made "by a sword." ¶ *All the world wondered.*—The Roman government was undoubtedly a wonder to all the world. "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped

the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is;" Rev. xvii. 8. Whether the wonder was excited at the greatness of the empire, its marvellous progress, or whether it arose from the condition of the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, is somewhat doubtful. The empire itself was doubtless the wonder of all the world.

4. *Worshipped the dragon.* — The dragon was worshipped; that is to say, the people revered the power represented by him. ¶ *Worshipped the beast.* — They revered also the power represented by the beast. Both powers were the objects of adoration; but the beast was the warlike power; not like the dragon, in a spiritual contest; but Rome secular had immense armies at her command. ¶ *Who is like unto the beast?* — Well might the wondering multitude say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" But after all, the confidence in the power of the empire was too great, for great as the empire was, it did finally fall. And we read in the chapter we are considering, that one of the heads of the beast was "wounded to death," ver. 3, "by a sword," ver. 14; and we are told (ver. 10) that "he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." Rome, with its terrible arm, was not unconquerable. There was a time, however, when she appeared to be so. Within the space of a little more than a hundred years, she made herself the mistress of the world. Her dominion extended from the islands of the Atlantic on the west, to the river Euphrates on the east, and from the Mediterranean on the south, almost indefinitely towards the north pole; at least, so as to include all civilized countries. She embraced all that part of Europe and Asia

which was famous for letters and the arts; and may, therefore, be said to have swayed the world. She was preëminent in the art of war. The ablest generals were in her service; and if she had not the largest armies at her command, she had those that were sufficiently numerous, and that for a long time contended successfully with the armies of all other parts of the world. Can we be surprised, then, that "all the world wondered after the beast"? and said, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him"? A clear distinction, it seems to us, is observable between the beast and the dragon, although they are alike in certain very essential particulars. The world does not say, Who is like unto the dragon? who is able to make war with the dragon? The dragon represented the spiritual, not the sword-bearing, power. The dragon did not make war as the beast did. The contest which the dragon and his angels carried on was not on earth, but was seen in the air, among the stars. It was metaphorical, or spiritual. It was with Michael and his angels, the imaginary guardians of the faithful Christians. The dragon was worsted, and was thrown down from the height of his power. Christianity gained the ascendancy in the empire. We see, then, a plain distinction between the dragon and the beast; the former, it would seem, referred to the spiritual power, or heathenism; the latter represented the secular power of the state.

5. *A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.* — The phraseology of Daniel is preserved all along in this chapter. This "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" is a method of speech borrowed from that prophet. See Dan. vii. 8: "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and

power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth

whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." — Also verse 11, "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." And again, verse 25: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws." Daniel, like the revelator, was speaking of the Roman empire under the figure of a beast; and the revelator evidently quotes the prophet's language. Did not the Roman rulers utter great things against the Most High? Did not the beast have upon his heads the name of blasphemy?

¶ *Forty and two months.* — This beast was to continue *forty and two months*. Many speculations, very wise, we have no doubt, in the opinions of their authors, have been offered in regard to the time intended by this phrase. We have already stated, that, in our judgment, it was a mere metaphor of time, to signify the season of the church's depression, and of the exaltation of her enemies. It is far from being certain that the various phrases, "a time, and times, and dividing of time," Dan. vii. 25; "a time, times, and a half," xii. 7; Rev. xii. 14; "forty and two months," Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5; and "twelve hundred and sixty days," Rev. xi. 3; xii. 6; all signify the same time, or even the same length of time. The expression originated with Daniel, and was used by him (vii. 25) to signify the season of the predominance of the opposing power against the saints of the Most High. Now, let the reader take a hint from this fact. The time, times, and half a time, is the season of the depression of the saints and the

power of their enemies, whether it may have been longer or shorter. The revelator, who will be found a most obsequious imitator of Daniel in his metaphors, quotes the method of speech from him. But the revelator, preserving the general idea, still varies his phraseology, and uses "forty and two months" and "twelve hundred and sixty days," which evidently enough are of similar force and interpretation with the time, times, and half a time, or year, years, and half a year. One year, two years, and a half of a year, are exactly forty-two months, and forty-two months of thirty days each, (as the Jews reckoned,) are just twelve hundred and sixty days. And when Daniel says, at the close of his prophecy, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days," the meaning is, Blessed is he that liveth to the days beyond the season of the prostration of the saints. In respect to the destruction of the Jews, the Christians were assured "the day of the Lord should come as a thief in the night;" 1 Thess. v. 1, 2. The early Christians were prohibited from inquiring too particularly into those matters. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power;" Acts i. 7. The precise day and hour of Christ's coming they were not to know, but they were to keep always ready for it, for it should surely come in that generation, and to many it would come unexpectedly, like "a thief in the night." This was all the Christians were to know in regard to the time. It is manifestly certain, then, that none of the sacred writers meant to foretell the exact number of days.

6. *Blasphemy against God.* — Rome blasphemed God. Hence we read that upon the seven heads of the beast was "the name of blasphemy," verse

in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him

1, and that he had "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies," verse 5. Rome blasphemed the name of God, and his tabernacle, and those that dwelt therein, or in heaven, which means the same thing. The tabernacle of God was with men; and they who were brought to know, and love, and serve him, dwelt in his tabernacle, or in heaven. Hence Paul said to the Hebrew Christians, "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," &c.; xii. 22. By those who "dwelt in heaven," is meant those who have entered the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. We have no doubt that the early Christians were obliged to endure all manner of reproaches and blasphemies. Some of the Roman emperors arrogated to themselves honors, and were called by names, which belonged to God alone. In this way they blasphemed God.

7. *Make war with the saints, and overcome them.*—He was permitted to make war with the saints; he was permitted to overcome them. It was allowed for wise and holy purposes. The language above quoted is the language of Daniel, which he used in regard to the Roman beast. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;" vii. 21. But he prevailed against them only for a time; and during that time his power was very wide; it extended over "all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." See Rev. xi. 7; xii. 17. In the sequel he was to fall. His triumph could not be long. The revelator says, in a subsequent passage, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to

to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon

make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh;" xix. 19—21. This was the final overthrow of the beast. It was not permitted that he should always make war upon the church.

8. *All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.*—This is but a reiteration of the fact stated in verses 3 and 4. But during this very general devotion to the power of Rome, both in religion and government, there were some who did not join in it, viz., those whose names are "written in the book of life of the Lamb." We have already expressed our opinion of the phrase "book of life," in the notes on Rev. iii. 5, to which we refer. A few additional particulars are here added. It was an ancient custom to speak of the names of the faithful as being written in a book; and when one was ejected, or cut off, his name was said to be blotted out. See Exod. xxxii. 31—33: "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Book is used metaphorically for re-

the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in

the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

*membrance.* See Psa. lvi. 8: "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" or remembrance. See also Mal. iii. 16: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." The figure occurs also in Daniel, from which the revelator borrows so frequently: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book;" xii. 1. From Phil. iv. 3, (and this is the only place in which the phrase "book of life" occurs, except in the Apocalypse.) we should conclude it meant the roll of Christian believers. To blot one's name out of the book of life, was to consider him no longer as a faithful disciple, but to set him apart from the true and the good. The names of the faithful are written in the book of life, the roll of those who enjoy eternal life; the names of the unfaithful are not there. If a Christian fall away, his name having been there, is said to be blotted out. Such is the general tenor of the language used about the book of life; the whole is metaphorical. ¶ *Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.* — By the Lamb is unquestionably meant Jesus, who is so often mentioned in the Apocalypse under that figure; and he is said to have been slain "from the foundation of the world," either because his death took place at the very beginning of the gospel dispensation, — or, what is more probable, because that sacrifice was determined in the mind of God from the beginning of the world, (*kosmos.*) Rev. xiii. 8, or, in the ages of old, (*chronois aioniois,*) Rom. xvi. 25.

A comparison of all the passages in which this phrase occurs would seem to show, that it signifies past time indefinitely, as if we should say, "before all time," or, "from all past time," or from the ages of old, as in Rom. xvi. 25, referred to above. The truths of the gospel had remained a mystery, or been kept secret from the foundation of the world, or all past time; Matt. xiii. 35: the kingdom had been prepared for the believers from the foundation of the world, or all past time; Matt. xxv. 34: the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world was to be required of that generation of the Jews which slew Christ; Luke xi. 50; i. e., the blood of all that had been slain; for Matthew has it, "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar;" Matt. xxiii. 35: Jesus was loved of the Father before the foundation of the world; John xvii. 24: and believers were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; Eph. i. 4; that is, before time begun, in the eternal councils of the Father. In Heb. iv. 3, the works of God, at the creation, are said to have been from the foundation of the world; and if it had been necessary for Christ, like the high priest, to have been sacrificed every year, then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, Heb. ix. 26, or from the beginning. Christ was a Lamb, without spot or blemish, preordained before the foundation of the world, i. e., before all time, in the eternal councils of the Father; 1 Pet. i. 20; and this is the precise phraseology employed in the Apocalypse, and which Peter seems almost to have quoted from it; Rev. xiii. 8. See, also, xvii. 8. These are all the passages in the New Testament in which the phrase *apo* or

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword.

*pro kataboles kosmon* occurs. The word *katabole* (foundation) occurs in one other connection only, Heb. xi. 11.

9. *If any man have an ear* — This denotes the importance of the communication to all. It is of similar import with the words of the poet:

“Let every mortal ear attend.”

As the art of printing was not then known, and few persons could obtain the manuscript books in existence, the greater part were obliged to listen to the reading of others. The words will bear the construction, “If any man have an inclination to listen, let him hear.” A “heart to perceive” is a heart able and willing to perceive; “eyes to see” are eyes ready and willing to see; and “ears to hear” are ears open and inclined to hear; Deut. xxix. 4. In some the heart is fat and the ears heavy; Isa. vi. 10; and they “turn away their ears from the truth;” 2 Tim. iv. 4; Acts vii. 57. See the notes on Rev. ii. 7, 11. The words in the case before us may refer to what precedes, or what follows, or both.

10. *Must be killed with the sword.* — Suffering as the Christians did under the cruelty of the Romans, it became necessary to give them the assurance, that however powerful their enemies then were, a change was near. The conquerors of all the world should themselves at last be conquered. The successful warriors should be overcome. Jesus had said, “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword;” Matt. xxvi. 52; they incur the great risk of perishing in that manner. But some writers think that something more definite than this is intended in the passage before us. Professor Stuart, for instance, says:

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

“There is, in this whole passage, a most palpable allusion to Nero;” and it has more life and energy when we suppose him to have been still living. The writer foretells what must inevitably be the doom of such a tyrant. In fact, Nero *exiled* himself from Rome, and intended to make his escape into distant countries, but he was arrested in his retreat, and fell by his own sword, or by that of his assailants. ¶ *Here is the patience and faith of the saints* — i. e., the ground or cause of their patience and faith. Had it not been for this assurance, they would have sunk under their sufferings perhaps; but knowing that their tribulations were not always to continue, their patience and their faith were preserved. See Heb. vi. 12.

11. *Another beast.* — This is *therion*, a spiteful, cruel animal, like the first beast, and not like the *zoa*, the four beasts, or living creatures, round about the throne. And here follows another distinction. This is not a beast with seven heads and ten horns; but he has “two horns like a lamb.” He has a very mild and amiable aspect; but there is murder in his heart. He has some affinity to the fire-colored dragon. *He spake as a dragon.* And he had also some affinity to the beast, and is truly called *another* beast. But we shall learn more of him as we proceed. It is particularly to be observed, notwithstanding his outward lamb-like appearance, that his communications were manifestly dragon-like. He spoke for the dragon, to aid his cause, as well as that of the seven-headed beast. He came up out of the earth. The dragon was first seen in heaven, xii. 3; i. e., in the firmament; but he was out of his place; he had no business there; and

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and

them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

was cast down to the earth, xii. 9; i. e., he was thrown down from his high place of power. The seven-headed beast rose up out of the sea, xiii. 1, but the two-horned beast rose up out of the earth. They all had an earthly origin; they all belonged beneath; but for the sake of variety in the scenery, one is said to rise from the sea, the other from the land.

12. *Exerciseth all the power of the first beast.*—He was a very successful auxiliary to the first beast, and made use of his power; i. e., the power of the empire was prostituted to aid him. These two powers were mutual friends. They aided each other. They had similar, if not identical, interests. The two-horned beast held a kind of half-way relation between the dragon and the seven-headed beast. They were all three joined in this one enterprise, opposition to Christianity. The dragon strove to uphold the seven-headed beast, —i. e., the heathen influence exerted itself to sustain the imperial power. The dragon and the last named beast represented the heathen and the secular power of Rome; and the two-horned beast, so like a lamb in appearance, and like a dragon in his soul, may well represent those apparently lamb-like priests and false prophets, who, by their influence over the people, sustained both the heathen and secular power. ¶ *To worship the first beast.*—He shared with the first beast all the unsubstantial glory of his prosperity, and went down with him to destruction, as we shall have occasion to show. He was the same that was called "the false prophet," xvi. 13, of whom it was said: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were

cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone;" xix. 20. He is here called a false prophet, a deceiver, a foreteller of future events, a diviner, an oracle, &c. Does not this have reference to the heathen priests? And again: "And the devil [or dragon, for in this connection they mean the same power] that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever;" xx. 10. These quotations let us somewhat into the history of this second beast, who was so much like the lamb in appearance, so much like the dragon in nature. But we will proceed: we shall become better acquainted with him.

13. *He doeth great wonders.*—That is, he affected to perform miracles; and among other things, he appeared to make fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men. False prophets have often professed to have the power to perform miracles; and have been able, at times, to do their works with so much adroitness as to deceive mankind, and even very intelligent men. That God may perform a real miracle, no man in his senses can doubt. He who framed all the laws of nature, can, if necessary, suspend them. He might also empower any chosen servant of his to do the same thing; but no man of himself can perform a miracle. There is no law of God by which any man can perform a miracle; nor can any man have that power, except by the special communication of it to him by God. Miracles are departures from the course of nature, and are of course beyond the power of man. When men, therefore, actually perform miracles, it is a proof that God is with them; that they are his servants; that he wishes them accredited as such;

### 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire

and for that purpose he bestows a portion of his wondrous power upon them. Such being the definition and basis of true miracles, it is not to be wondered at that false prophets and pretenders should seek to imitate them. It is precisely what we should expect they would do; it is what they have done from the earliest antiquity. God bestowed on Moses, his servant and representative on earth, divine power, by which he performed miracles in attestation of his claims. See the following passage: "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent: and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign;" Exodus iv. 1—8. This covers all the ground we have here taken in regard to miracles. God has the power to suspend the laws of nature; he can create and destroy; he can communicate this power to others; he can work in and

by them; and if it be necessary for a man, in an age of great bigotry and unbelief, to be received as a divinely appointed messenger, is it not perfectly reasonable to believe that God would clothe him with power by which he could attest his claims in the presence of all unbelievers? It is also reasonable to suppose that impostors would seek to keep themselves in countenance by attempting the performance of miracles themselves. True, they cannot perform miracles, because no man ever did perform them except he had received power of God for that special purpose; and it is not to be believed that God would bestow such power upon an impostor. But *why* should an *impostor* desire to perform miracles? or to lead mankind to believe that he performed them? The only answer that can be given to this question is this: he wishes not to be regarded as an impostor, but as a true servant of God. Have not the true servants of God, then, in different ages, had the power to perform actual miracles? If they have, we can see plainly why false prophets should desire to be thought able to perform miracles; but if they have not, then there is no reason for such a desire on the part of false prophets, since even the real performance of a miracle, if they had power to do it, would add nothing to their claims. The existence of false, or pretended miracles, therefore, is a proof of genuine miracles, as the existence of false coin is a proof of the existence of genuine coin. Would there ever have been any counterfeit money, if there never had been any that was genuine? It was not long after Moses was empowered of God to perform miracles in attestation of his appointment as the servant of God, that the Egyptian sorcerers and magicians attempted the performance of the same things. They had the appearance of turning their rods into serpent-like Moses. Now, unless Moses was him-

come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

self a deceiver, he wrought a real miracle; but this the magicians of Pharaoh could not have done; though they might have thrown serpents from beneath the folds of their garments in such a manner, as to give the appearance of having changed their rods into those animals. Not only the Egyptians, but also the children of Israel were commanded to believe on Moses, not on account of his private character, but on account of the miracles which he performed; Num. xiv. 22; Deut. xi. 1—8; Judges vi. 13. These miracles were not only such as we have already described, but various other wonderful works, such as leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea, feeding them forty years in the wilderness with miraculous manna; smiting the barren rock, and bringing out water for their drink, &c. &c. Now these facts were such as men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, were judges of. They were done publicly in the face of the world. Public monuments have been kept up, and outward actions have been performed in commemoration of them. These monuments and actions have existed from the time the acts were done. Imposition, in these cases, therefore, is impossible. — (Leslie.) Could Moses have persuaded hundreds of thousands of men that he had done these things, led them across the bed of the Red Sea, on dry land, and fed them with manna, &c. &c., if he had done no such thing? Could he have thus imposed upon their senses? The thing was impossible. Could he have made them receive his five books as true, which told of these things, if they had known that such things had not been done? See how positively he speaks to them, Deut. xi. 2—8. Could Moses have persuaded the Jews to believe that they themselves had seen these things, if they never had seen them? Shall we say then that the books purporting to be the books of Moses were written

some ages after his day, and were put forth in his name? If so, there must have been a time when they were invented and *first* put forth. But this supposition is incredible, as they profess to have been put forth *by Moses*. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee;" Deut. xxxi. 24—26. A copy of this work was also to be given to the king, that he might study it and live by it. "And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them;" Deut. xvii. 18, 19. Now, in whatever after age the book may be supposed to have been forged, it would have been impossible to have made the people receive it as truth; because, on that supposition, it would not have been found in the ark, or with the king, or anywhere else. For, when first invented, it must have been known by all, that it never had been heard of before. Leslie asks, (and we have copied this argument from him,) "Could any man now, at this day, invent a book of statutes or acts of parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the books of Moses (if they were invented in any age after Moses) to have been received for what they declared themselves to be, viz., the statutes and municipal law of the nation of the Jews; and to have persuaded

## 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means

the Jews that they had owned and acknowledged these books all along, from the days of Moses to that day in which they were first invented; that is, that they had owned them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole nation must, in an instant, forget their former laws and government, if they could receive these books as being their former laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouched themselves so to be. Let me ask the deist but this one short question, Was there ever a book of sham laws, which were not the laws of the nation, palmed upon any people, since the world began? If not, with what face can they say this of the book of laws of the Jews? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any nation, or among any people?" It is further to be said, in regard to the wonderful works of Moses, performed in behalf of the children of Israel, that public monuments and acts were set up to commemorate them, such as sacrifices, feasts, fasts, &c. &c. A whole class of people were set apart as priests to teach the nation these things forever. Monuments were built that existed for ages, to hand down the remembrance of these events to future generations. "And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever;" Joshua iv. 21—24. Now suppose that the wonders which these mon-

uments were designed to commemorate (and we take them as a sample of the whole) never took place, how can we account for the building of the monument, and the establishment of the festivals? If it be said, the monument was built for some other purpose, and the festivals were established for some other purpose at first, and afterwards came to be considered as proofs of these things, then we ask, would not the people have said, "We never heard of this reason for them before? We have observed the festivals, and seen the monuments from our earliest days; but never before did we hear that these things were designed for the purpose for which you now cite them." Suppose (if we may for a moment entertain the supposition) that in some distant future age the object for which the Bunker Hill monument was erected shall be forgotten. Nobody then shall know why it had been built. We will then suppose that some designing person should say, that the settlers of New England came down from the north country, and on arriving on the bank of the Mystic, they found it impossible to cross over; that on the 4th day of July, upon a certain year, the river divided, and they passed across its bed, without even wetting the soles of their feet; and that the monument had been erected to commemorate that event, and that the festival on the 4th of July had been regularly observed all over the nation ever since for the same purpose. Could he succeed in such a design? Would not the people say, we know not why this monument was built, (if the memory of it had been lost,) but if the account you give us be true, how does it happen that we never heard of it before? We have the annals of our nation in the public archives, and no such thing is mentioned there. Would it be possible for any man under heaven to persuade the people to believe any such thing? The festi-

of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the

vals, therefore, of the children of Israel, must have been commenced at the time alleged in the Scriptures, and for that purpose, for they could not have been commenced at any other time. How could the commemoration of the 4th of July, for the purposes for which we hallow the day, ever have been begun, if the independence of the nation had not been declared on that day? How could the festivals of the Jews, on their holy days, ever have begun, if the high, sacred, remarkable events they were designed to commemorate, had never happened? Will any man in his sober senses say, that the religious books, festivals, and regular observances of the Jews, are all so many cheats put upon the people; and that they were commemorative of things that never occurred? We cannot. There are no false miracles substantiated like the miracles of Moses, and those of the New Testament. These miracles were outward, tangible, undeniable works, such as men's outward senses may take cognizance of; they were done in the most public manner; monuments have been kept up in memory of them, and outward acts have been performed by the thousands of Israel for the same purpose; and these monuments and acts must have commenced from the time the acts were done. He who, after all this, can believe that the account of the wonders performed before the face of the children of Israel is all false, may be led even to doubt his own existence. The Jews themselves are a standing monument of the truth of the Bible; and he who can study carefully the history of that people, and still disbelieve the Old Testament account of them, must be diseased in mind, with such a passion for doubting, that he is invulnerable to all evidence. As to the miracles of the New Testament, we have not room to go into the consideration of them here. Those who

wish to examine whether Christ and his apostles performed miracles, and what was the nature of those miracles, and why they performed them, and for what purposes they referred to them, may consult Mark vi. 52; ix. 39; Luke xxiii. 8; John ii. 11, 23; iii. 2; iv. 54; vi. 2, 26; vii. 31; ix. 16; x. 41; xi. 47; xii. 37; Acts ii. 22; iv. 16, 22; vi. 8; viii. 6, 13; xv. 12; xix. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29; Gal. iii. 5; Heb. ii. 4. We have already shown, that false or pretended miracles are presumptive evidences of genuine miracles; and we have therefore thought it not improper, in considering the false miracles or wonders, or signs, of the Roman pagan priests, to go into the consideration of real miracles so far as we have done. If we believe there is a God, we have no doubt of his power over nature. He, therefore, can perform a miracle (or what is to men a miracle) if he please. If he were to send a messenger to the world, in what way could he better satisfy the world of his true character, than by proving that the power of God was with him, — power beyond the power of man. This God did in the case of Moses, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their miracles bore every mark of honesty, — they were performed publicly, in the presence of enemies, not to gain the favor of men, but in the sacred performance of *duty*, when it was known that those who performed them thereby incurred the wrath of the leading men in power, and perilled all they held dear on earth, and even life itself. They have been attested in every age since, as the miracle of our Lord's resurrection has been attested by the festival of the Lord's supper, which forms an unbroken chain of evidence from the time of the resurrection to the present day. It is not to be wondered at, then, that false teachers have sought to keep up the appearance of the power to work miracles. Such was the case

beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they

of the beast mentioned in the verse we have before us, who represented the wonder-working power of the pagan priests. But we shall speak further on these subjects under the next verse.

14. *By the means of those miracles.*

— We are told, that the frogs which came out of the mouth of the false prophet, “are the spirits of devils [adversaries] working miracles;” xvi. 13, 14; and it is also said: “The beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him;” xix. 20. It is said of the second beast that “he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” Do not these passages, when compared, justify the conclusion that by the second beast was intended those false prophets, or teachers of the pagan religion, who falsely pretended to perform miracles, and who were so skilled in wicked works of art and legerdemain, that they actually deceived the people in regard to those things? It surely is not intended that they actually performed these miracles; for *false* prophets, as we have shown under the preceding verse, cannot really perform miracles; and, moreover, had they really performed miracles, they would not have been represented as deceiving the people, which all along the second beast, or false prophet, is represented as having done. It is well to bear in mind, that the second beast existed simultaneously with the first, otherwise he could not have performed his alleged miracles *in his sight*. False prophets, in all ages of the world, have pretended to perform miracles; and have sometimes carried on their deceptions with so much adroitness as to give them greatly the appearance

should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by

of reality. Such was the case with the Egyptian sorcerers and magicians in Pharaoh’s court, Exod. vii. 11, as we have before noticed. Jesus foretold, that at the second advent “many false prophets should arise;” Matt. xxiv. 11; and again, that there should arise “false Christs, [anti-Christ], and false prophets, who should show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect;” verse 24; and all the rest of the world they did deceive. See Mark xiii. 22. Paul described the false prophet to the church at Thessalonica. He calls him the “man of sin,” “the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;” 2 Thess. ii. 4; [hence, his blasphemy.] And again he says: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;” verses 8—10. The phrase, “spirit of his mouth,” will be explained by the following passages. Jesus said, Rev. ii. 16: “I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;” i. e., the piercing power of his word. Hence it is said, (i. 16,) “Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;” and Paul said: “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” &c.; Heb. iv. 12; and in Ephesians he tells us, that “the sword of the spirit” is “the word of God;” vi. 17. The consuming with the spirit of his mouth, or fighting with the sword of his mouth, refers to the power of his

a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause

*word.* The false prophet would be slain with the power of the divine word, at the coming of Christ, or the full establishment of Christianity.

15. *Give life unto the image of the beast.*—It is no more meant here that the false prophet could give life to the image of the beast, than it was intended in the preceding verse that he could actually perform miracles. He merely had the power to make the image of the beast appear as if it were alive. Reference seems to be had here to some idol, or oracle, highly respected in the empire, perhaps made in the image of some of the great men deceased, or perhaps of the reigning emperor; and the false prophet made the oracle appear to speak, as it was once generally thought the oracle did; and the oracle announced "that as many as would not worship the image of the beast," or the oracle, one of the essential props of the pagan religion of antiquity, "should be killed," which the secular power would of course see fit to have done. These were terrific times to the poor Christians. Here we see the deception that was carried on by this false prophet, and also the cruelty that reigned in his heart. Mark the language: "The image of the beast should both *speak* and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Is it not true then, as stated in the 11th verse, that "he spake as a dragon?" He was auxiliary to the dragon; he moved at his bidding; he deceived the people, and used all his arts and intrigue to subserve the cause of the dragon and the seven-headed beast.

16. *Receive a mark*;—i. e., as a sign of their allegiance to the beast. It was the name, or number of the

that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor,

beast, perhaps, or some significant appellation showing that they acknowledged the beast's authority.

¶ *In their right hand, or in their foreheads.*—The false prophet had a wide influence in the empire. He caused all, of every degree, to be most publicly known as the adherents of the beast,—to wear his brand, or mark, in their right hand, to denote that all their power was given to him, or in their forehead, as the most public avowal of their adherence. They were not permitted to remain neutral. In the most public manner they must avow, and with their strongest energies they must defend, the interests of the beast. Those who received the mark of the beast, or in other words acknowledged his authority, were made to suffer all the punishments that fell upon the enemies of the Lord Jesus. See xiv. 9—11, where will be found a more full explanation of this subject. See, also, xvi. 2; xix. 20. But those who got the victory over the beast and over his "mark," were the friends of God. They worshipped God, and sang the song of Moses and the Lamb, xv. 2, and they lived and reigned with Christ, upon the earth; xx. 4. They had the name of God and of the New Jerusalem written upon them,—the Father's name being in their foreheads. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name;" Rev. iii. 12. See also xiv. 1: "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four

free and bond to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads ;

17 And that no man might

thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." The false prophet also sought to regulate trade and commerce among men, and turn even those things to the advantage of the beast. See the remarks under the next verse.

17. *No man might buy or sell.*—After having compelled men, by the fear of losing their lives, to avow their allegiance to the beast in the most public manner, and to consecrate their strongest and most active powers to his service, he procured it to be established that no other man should buy or sell. If there were any backwardness which brought suspicion upon a man that he was not a friend of the beast, if the proof were not strong enough to convict him, and thus produce his death, then his business should be entirely broken up. All means of livelihood were thus to be taken away from those who would not give their influence to the pagan religion. They were crippled in every manner possible ; they were continually harassed ; all means, however unjust, that would have an effect to coerce the people into the service of the beast, were resorted to. We have seen how willing, how active, how efficient an auxiliary was this second beast, or false prophet, the lamb-like in appearance, the dragon-like in nature, the pagan priests and sorcerers. There was none other power in the empire that at all came up to the description of the revelator, except the power we have now described. It has been one of the most common means employed by false religionists in all ages of the world, to compel men to adopt their views and subserve their interests, by interfering with their worldly business. Every advantage has been thrown by them into the hands of

buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

those who were with them ; they have been aided in their secular employments ; their places of sale have been largely patronized. But on the other hand, opposite means have been used. The opponent of the dominant power, however pure, however honest he may have been, has been put down. The strong arm has crushed him. His business has been undermined ; and every means have been adopted to bring on his ruin. Let all who have ever followed practices of this kind see that they have been apt learners in the school of the false prophet of the Apocalypse.

18. *Here is wisdom.*—The subject of this verse was probably regarded as important, and perhaps was easily understood at the time the book was written. At this day it is much more difficult to give it a construction. "*Here is wisdom*," or here wisdom is required. As if he had said, this can be understood only by the wise, or the initiated. To those who could understand the matter, this was probably the most definite description of the power intended by the beast, that is contained in the whole allegory. The Apocalypse was probably written in the allegorical style, that while it benefitted the Christians, who would understand it, it would not so greatly provoke their enemies, who would not so readily comprehend it, as if written in a more direct and plain manner. The metaphors, therefore, are such as were drawn principally from the sacred Jewish books, which the Christians would readily comprehend, but their heathen enemies would not. In this way the revelator sought to instruct his brethren, without unnecessarily exciting the vengeance of their enemies. Having set forth the persecuting power under the figure of the beast, he comes at last

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding

to show more definitely what power he meant, by a process which would furnish positive information to those who could understand. But peculiar wisdom was required; none but him who had understanding could "count the number." ¶ *Count the number.* — What number? Ans. "The number of his name;" ver. 17. See also chap. xv. 2, where we find proof that the beast referred to was not the two-horned beast, but the principal, the one with ten horns, whose image the people worshipped. And what was meant by "the number of his name?" Everybody knows, that previously to the invention of *figures*, in the tenth century, the letters of the alphabet had been used as *numerals*. It was so among the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans, and we suppose many other nations. Proofs of this are abundant. Let the common reader look at the 119th Psalm, and he will find the sections of it numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., by the use of the Hebrew letters Aleph, (A, or 1,) Beth, (B, or 2,) Gimel, (3,) Daleth, (4,) &c. A similar system of numeration has just been introduced into the army of the United States; and instead of marking the companies of a regiment 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., they are called company A, company B, &c. We will suppose then, for the sake of an illustration, that all the letters of our alphabet have a numerical value, thus,

A 1	G 7	M 40	S 100	Y 700
B 2	H 8	N 50	T 200	Z 800
C 3	I 9	O 60	U 300	
D 4	J 10	P 70	V 400	
E 5	K 20	Q 80	W 500	
F 6	L 30	R 90	X 600	

Now, spell a man's name as you might, there would be a certain *number* attached to it. The common name *Smith*, would be S (100) M (40) I (9) T (200) H (8,) which figures being added together would make 357 as "the number of his name." ¶ *Six hundred threescore and six.* — That is,

666. The Christian fathers began right early to find out the secret of the revelator (for they sought to be very precise) by "counting the number of the beast." They forgot the premonition "Here is wisdom;" and "let him [only] that hath understanding count the number of the beast." They brought it out in the following manner. We give the Roman instead of the Greek letters, and use the letters according to the system which then prevailed.

THE LATIN	E ( <i>the Greek article</i> )	.	8
	L	.	30
	A	.	1
	T	.	300
	I	.	10
LATIN	N	.	50
	E ( <i>long</i> )	.	8
	B	.	2
	A	.	1
	S	.	200
KINGDOM.	I	.	10
	L	.	30
	E ( <i>short</i> )	.	5
	I	.	10
	A	.	1

666

When the discovery was made, that the letters in the words *E Latine Basileia*, made up the number six hundred and sixty-six, there remained for some time no doubt that The Latin Kingdom [in Greek *E Latine Basileia*] was the beast. If the reader will look into Adam Clarke's Commentary, he will find that writer was carried utterly away with this idea. But the whole is a fallacy, for this one plain reason, that the same letters, in a different arrangement, would spell different words, and yet would have just the same numeral result. It makes no difference into how many different arrangements you put the letters; they always amount to 666. This mode of calculation, therefore has fallen into discredit, from the fact,

count the number of the beast : for it is the number of a man

resulting from experience, that there is no end to the multitude of names which may be composed by such fabrications; and that not only the anti-christian chiefs, but the most eminent of our reformers may be, and have been thus designated by their adversaries. The Hebrew words for *Luther* amount to 666, a circumstance which has caused the Catholics to offset against the Protestants the attempts to show that the apocalyptic beast had some connection with the papal church. It is also a remarkable fact, that the Hebrew words for "The Most High, the Lord, the Holy God," amount to precisely 666. — See Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Anti-Christ, where he gives a tabular view of words, or names, the numeral force of which is that number.

We are then thrown back upon our inquiry, what is meant by "the number of his name?" Shall *we* attempt to answer? The very language forbids; "Here is wisdom;" here lies the secret, which none but those who had an understanding of the revelator's enigma can explain. It is "the number of a man," although it is called "the number of the beast." The number is 666. Whether the revelator used the Hebrew or Greek letters for numerals, those who were instructed in the matter knew. They explained it to others. The number was the key to denote the power referred to. We content ourselves with knowing that the Roman Empire in general was intended by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. The name of some eminent opposer of the church, perhaps one of the emperors, was intended by "the number of the beast." But this is conjecture. The Christians at the time *knew*. We are checked by the admonition, "Let him *that hath understanding* count the number of the beast." We have not that understanding. Cruden explains the matter very wisely, and we shall leave it

where he does: "The number of the beast, or the number of the name of the beast, stands for the numerical value of the letters that compose his name."

Having offered our own opinion, we add to the above, the conjecture of Prof. Stuart, since, if he be correct, it agrees with what we have stated. He says: "Quite recently, however, Prof. Benary, of Berlin, has proposed a more ingenious, and to my mind more satisfactory, explanation of the *modus* in question, than any with which I have before met. He regards it as nearly certain, that the letters indicative of the number in question, must be Hebrew letters, although he does not seem to have given a satisfactory reason. The very design however, of partial concealment, seems to be, as I have already hinted, a good reason for the adoption of this method by John. A heathen Greek or Roman would not be likely to divine the writer's meaning, in case the latter designed to make the appeal to Hebrew letters or words; while there were everywhere Jewish Christians in the churches, who could easily unravel it. Benary remarks, that in the Talmud and other Rabbinical writings, the name of Nero [in the Hebrew form] often occurs. This amounts numerically to the number of the beast; for the force of the Hebrew letters added together is 666. Nor is this all. There was another method of writing and pronouncing the name of Nero, approaching nearer to the Roman method. This was the Hebrew letters for Nero Cæsar, which amount numerically to just 616, and thus gives a good ground for the diverse reading which Irenæus found in some codices. This is surely a remarkable coincidence. The same name, pronounced after the Greek and Hebrew analogy, equals numerically the sum of 666, but spoken in the Latin way it amounts to 616, which is the rival reading. Nothing can be more

and his number is Six hundred

natural and easy then, than to account in this way for both of the readings in the codices. The discrepant modes of sounding Nero's name, whether fully in Hebrew, or in an abridged way, gave rise to the different designations of the corresponding numbers. A solution of the various readings, which is so natural and obvious, one is strongly tempted to believe, must have its foundation in truth and reality." So far, in substance, Prof. Stuart. See his Commentary, vol. ii. 457, 458, Excursus iv. The reason why the revelator did not give fully, and without enigma, the name he intended, is easily seen; he did not desire to bring down upon the unoffending church, the pointed indignation of the power intended. If the seven-headed beast intended the Roman secular power, as we think we have clearly shown, then the name of the beast may well be considered the name of the reigning emperor at the time the Apocalypse was written.

Since the above was written, I have received from a friend the following singular paragraph, which he states was copied from an old book, called the "Gospel Treasury," p. 125. The date and authorship of the book were gone. We present the extract as a very striking illustration of the ingenuity which has been displayed in obtaining the beast's number, 666, from the names of eminent dignitaries, or of the places of their power.

"VICARIVS FILII DEI.

\* \* "Sometime ago, an English officer happening to be at Rome, observed on the front of the mitre which the pope wore at one of the solemnities, this inscription: 'VICARIVS FILII DEI.' It instantly struck him—perhaps this is 'the number of the beast.' He set to work: and when he had selected all the numerals, and added them up, he found, to his great astonishment, that the whole amounted to precisely six hundred

threescore and six. What stress is to be laid on this I cannot say.

"VICARIVS		FILII	DEI.
V	5	I	1
I	1	L	50
C	100	I	1
I	1	I	1
V	5	—	—
—	—	53	53
112	—	—	666."

Thus it will be seen, that by taking from the title "Vicarius Filii Dei," [Vicar of the Son of God,] the letters which are commonly used as numerals, they make up the number of the beast. We attach no importance, however, to the fact, and present it merely for the purpose named, and to show the very singular coincidence of numerals in that title.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Preliminary Considerations.*—The chapter before us is by no means an unimportant one. In chapters xii. and xiii. the pagan and secular power of Rome are set forth, the former under the figure of "a great red dragon," xii. 3, the latter under that of the beast that rose up out of the sea, xiii. 1. These two powers, which were the two active powers of the Roman Empire in the persecution of the Christians, being thus introduced to the reader, with that of the false prophet, xiii. 11—17, the revelator proceeds (viz., in chap. xiv., which we are now to examine) to give a general synopsis of the matters that remain to be treated of in the Apocalypse. In chapters xii. and xiii. are described the rise and reign of the persecuting powers of the empire. Chapter xiv. is *in favor of the church*. It describes the prosperity of the church, notwithstanding the persecutions; and the punishment of the persecutors, and of those by whom they were sustained. The

## CHAPTER XIV.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion,

effect of what is stated in chap. xiv. was to *encourage* the Christians. As, in chapters xii. and xiii., the prophecy is of things that were *against* the church, from henceforth the prophecy is more especially of things that make *for the church and against her enemies*.

The subjects treated in the 14th chapter are as follows :

1st. A view of the continued faithfulness of the Jewish converts, the hundred and forty-four thousand. See verses 1—5.

2d. The preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, and the judgment of the nations by the power thereof; verses 6, 7.

3d. The fall of Rome, the great seat of persecution in the empire, as Jerusalem had been the seat of persecution in the country of the Jews; ver. 8.

4th. The punishment of the Roman persecutors, and of those who sustained them, as the Jews had been punished; verses 9—11.

5th. The blessedness of the Christians, like the blessedness of the Jewish converts to Christianity; verses 12, 13.

6th. Coming of the Son of man in judgment on the Romans, as he came in judgment on the Jews; ver. 14.

7th. He reaps the harvest of the earth, and his enemies are crushed like grapes trodden in the wine-press; verses 15—20.

The figures here applied to the Romans are the same with those which had been applied to the Jews; Joel iii. 13; Jer. li. 33; Matt. xiii. 39. Such are the subjects treated of in the 14th chapter; and they are, as it were, a table of contents of what remains to be treated of in the Apocalypse. With these preliminary remarks, we proceed to consider the chapter more particularly.

and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

1. *A Lamb stood on the mount Zion.* — The first five verses of this chapter clearly describe the faith and constancy of the Jewish converts to Christianity. They were persecuted somewhat by the Roman power, and hence were introduced in this place by the revelator. The subject matter of these five verses has already been treated of, in the fifth chapter. The "Lamb" was the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world;" John i. 29; the Lamb that stood in the midst of the elders; Rev. v. 6; the Lamb that was an object of universal worship; v. 8—14; the Lamb that was "slain from the foundation of the world;" Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8. This Lamb stood on mount Zion. We are not to understand this of the mount in the literal sense; but of the gospel, which the figure mount Zion is used to designate. Hence Paul said to the Hebrew Christians: "Ye ARE COME unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;" Heb. xii. 22—24. ¶ *With him a hundred forty and four thousand.* — With the Lamb was the hundred and forty-four thousand, the same body of Christians mentioned in chap. vii. 4: "And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." These had the Father's name written in their foreheads; and so they are said to be sealed, as the servants of God, in their foreheads. The hundred and forty-four thou

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the

sand mentioned in vii. 3, were sealed in their foreheads. No one can doubt that it is the same hundred and forty-four thousand referred to in both cases. ¶ *Father's name written in their foreheads.*—The Father's name is written in their foreheads as the most conspicuous part of the body—they were not ashamed of their profession. The worshippers of the beast also had the *beast's* name on their foreheads; xiii. 16; xiv. 9; and the great harlot likewise had an inscription on her forehead, xvii. 5, the mark of her disgrace. It was a reward promised to the faithful Christians, that "him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name;" iii. 12. The faithful Christians acknowledged, in the most conspicuous manner, their allegiance to God.

2. *Voice from heaven.*—This "voice from heaven," was the voice of worship from mount Zion, as of the mingled voices of a hundred and forty-four thousand persons singing aloud the praise of their God. Mount Zion was heaven. Heaven is the spiritual state produced in the soul by the belief of the gospel. Hence Paul calls the gospel kingdom, the *heavenly* Jerusalem; and Christians are the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, that is, on the roll of the church: Heb. xii. 22—24. ¶ *As the voice of many waters, &c.*—It was like the noise of a cataract, or of great thunder; that is, it was exceedingly loud. So the voice of the Son of man was described; i. 15. The

voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne,

praise offered to God by the Christians throughout the Roman Empire is described in the same manner: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;" xix. 6. The description is designed to connect the idea of majesty and authority with the voice of Christ. The voice of a hundred and forty-four thousand people singing would necessarily be loud. ¶ *The voice of harpers harping with their harps.*—Harps had been used in the religious worship of the Jews, probably from the time of the earliest existence of that people, for the harp was constructed very early in the history of the world; Gen. iv. 21. David and all Israel played on harps; 2 Sam. vi. 4. It was an instrument in universal use among the Jews; especially in times of triumph, joy, and religious exultation; Job xxi. 12; Ps. xxxiii. 2; xliii. 4; lvii. 8; lxxi. 22; Isa. v. 12. In times of sorrow the voice of the harper was not heard; Ps. cxxxvii. 2; Isa. xxiv. 8; Ezk. xxvi. 13; Rev. xviii. 22. The music of the harp formed a very important part of the temple-service. Hence the praise of the Christian church to God, as it was an outbreaking of triumph and joy, is metaphorically described as "the voice of harpers harping with their harps." Thus the elders are represented as having harps, Rev. v. 8, and those also who stood on the sea of glass, xv. 2.

3. *And they sung a new song.*—That is, the hundred and forty-four thousand did this. All the preparation for singing is described in the preceding verse. They had made ready their harps, and had already

and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand,

begun the prelude on those instruments, which were also to accompany the voices in the song. What was this *new song*? It was called *new*, because it had never been sung before the Lamb was actually slain. It was the custom of the Jews, to "praise the name of God with a song;" *Psa.* lxi. 30. When any new matter of religious rejoicing came up, God was said to put a *new song* into the mouths of his people, *Psa.* xl. 3, a *new subject* of rejoicing and praise. These songs, when generally learned by the people, were very precious to them. They could sing them on Zion; they could sing them at home; but they could not sing them in a strange land; *Psa.* cxxxvii. 4. But THE NEW SONG mentioned in the verse before us was emphatically new. It was on a subject for which men had never sung the praise of God before. It was the song of redeeming love, which was commenced to be sung when the Lamb was actually slain. See *Rev.* v. 9, 10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." From this it is evident, that THE NEW SONG is the song of praise for redeeming love, by the blood of Christ, and for the triumph of Christian principles among men. This song was sung before the throne, and before the four beasts, and before the elders; which is precisely as the facts were described in chap. v. 6—9. ¶ *And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.* — For how could any besides the redeemed

which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for

sing the new song of redeeming love? By the redeemed here are meant those who had been brought to the knowledge of Jesus, and who believed in him. In one sense all men are redeemed, for Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" *1 Tim.* ii. 6. In another sense, those only are called the redeemed who have come to the knowledge of Jesus, and have experienced the benefits of the redemption in their own souls. The term is used in the latter sense in the verse before us. The new song all are to sing at last. All shall praise God for the gift of his Son. "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father;" *Phil.* ii. 9—11. This is the matter of the new song. The hundred and forty-four thousand were persons on the earth who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and purified thereby. But who they were is more fully made known in the two succeeding verses.

4. *Not defiled by women.* — The state of virginity is put for purity in doctrine and life. Paul says: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;" *2 Cor.* xi. 2. Believers are said to have "escaped the corruption that is in the world;" *2 Peter* i. 4. By parity of metaphor, fornication is put in the Scriptures for the sin of idolatry, and of partaking in the support and countenance of false religion. To go into idolatry, in the language of the Old Testament, was to go a whoring after heathen gods: "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God; lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they

they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men,

being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are

go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods;" Exodus xxxiv. 14—17.

See also Lev. xx. 5, 6; Deut. xxxi. 16; Psa. lxxiii. 27; Ezk. vi. 9. As the hundred and forty-four thousand kept themselves pure from false religion and crime, they are said not to have been defiled. ¶ *Follow the Lamb.* — They are said, too, to have followed "the Lamb whithersoever he went." This was a condition of discipleship. "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" Matt. x. 38. Again: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me;" John x. 27. ¶ *Redeemed from among men.* — They were redeemed from among men. "Ye are bought [says Paul] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's;" 1 Cor. vi. 20. Thus the believers were redeemed from among men, — they were brought out, made separate, and became a peculiar people zealous of good works. ¶ *The first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.* — So the Jewish Christians were in truth. They were the earliest converts to Christ. The gospel was first preached to the Jews; and although the great body of the people rejected it, yet some believed on the Son of God; and they were, of course, the earliest converts, or "the first-fruits." The figure is a beautiful one. The "first-fruits" were certain small portions of the harvest, gathered as soon as they were fully ripe; and they were offered to the Lord, in the temple, as a sign

of the dependence and gratitude of the people. They denoted that the harvest was ready to be gathered in; and it was certainly expected that *the whole harvest* would be gathered. The Jewish Christians were "the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb," or, as St. James says, (i. 18:) "A kind of first-fruits of his creatures." Jesus, when he rose from the dead, became "the first-fruits of them that slept;" 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23; that is, his resurrection was the proof and pledge of the subsequent resurrection of all men; for St. Paul so regarded the resurrection of Christ. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *first-fruits* of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall *ALL* be made alive;" 1 Cor. xv. 20—22. We see, then, that Christ's resurrection was the pledge and proof of the resurrection of all men. He was the first-fruits from the dead. The early Christians were the first-fruits of a general harvest. All the rest of God's moral creation will eventually become what they were. They were the sample and the pledge of it. For, as Paul says, "If the first-fruits be holy, the lump [i. e., all that remains] is holy;" Rom. xi. 16. The first-fruits were holy, for the revelator testifies, "In their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." Such were the first-fruits; such shall be the general harvest.

5. *No guile.* — Guile here is put for deceit. "Blessed is the man (says the Psalmist) unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile;" Psa. xxxii. 2. Again: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days,

without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach

that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it;" *Psa. xxxiv. 12—14.* When Jesus saw Nathanaël coming to him, he was struck with his honesty and sincerity, and said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" *John i. 47.* But the most remarkable passage, and the one which it is the most necessary we should quote in connection with this subject, is *1 Pet. ii. 22*, where, speaking of Jesus, the apostle says: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." We have but little doubt that the *Apocalypse* was written before the epistle of Peter, and that Peter had seen it, and learned this phraseology from it. We have mentioned other instances of Peter apparently quoting from the *Apocalypse*. ¶ *Without fault.*—Similar language often occurs in the New Testament. Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" *Luke i. 6.* See, also, *Eph. v. 27*; *Phil. ii. 15*; *2 Pet. iii. 14*; *Jude 24.* O that Christians might all live up to these descriptions! ¶ *Before the throne of God.*—To do a thing before God, or before the throne of God, is to do it seriously, heartily, solemnly, as if standing in the very presence of God. To be without fault before the throne of God, signified to be faultless in the sight of God, in his estimation, or judgment. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father," *Jas. i. 27*, means a religion that was pure and undefiled in his sight.

6. *Another angel.*—No angel had been spoken of previously in this connection. The word *another* here,

unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to

therefore, refers back to *viii. 13*, where we read of an angel flying through the midst of heaven. The angel mentioned in the verse before us, flew in the midst of heaven, and hence is called another, in reference to the former. ¶ *In the midst of heaven*;—i. e., he proceeded in the most public manner, having the everlasting gospel. ¶ *Everlasting gospel.*—The gospel is "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," *2 Sam. xxiii. 5*, and hence is called the "everlasting gospel." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever;" *Isa. xl. 8.* ¶ *Every nation, and kindred, &c.*—The gospel having been preached to the Jews, and having been rejected by the great body of that nation, the apostles turned to the Gentiles with the heavenly message; *Acts xiii. 46—49*; *xxviii. 28.* This preaching the gospel to the Gentiles is described by the angel "having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." This must be intended to describe the preaching of Christ to the Gentiles, who were called upon to fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment had come.

7. *Fear God.*—That is, reverence him. Fear does not here signify terror, nor any feeling inconsistent with the purest worship of God, because it is joined with worship, and with giving glory to God. It is not therefore slavish fear; but that true filial fear, or reverence, which is the beginning of wisdom. It is perfectly consistent with love, but the holy passion of love cannot exist towards an object which we dread. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love

him : for the hour of his judgment is come : and worship him

casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love ;" 1 John iv. 18.

¶ *The hour of his judgment is come.* — Mark the fact, that the hour of his judgment came simultaneously with the preaching of the gospel. The same angel that goes out to preach the everlasting gospel to them that *dwell on the earth*, also proclaims that the hour of God's judgment *is come* ; and at the same time that the judgment is come, he calls on men to worship God that made heaven and earth, &c. What judgment can this be except the judgment of the world by Jesus Christ under the gospel reign ? It is referred to in xv. 4 : " Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy : for all nations shall come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest." Was there any judgment set up simultaneously with the opening of the gospel, or the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world ? Most certainly there was. Let the reader re-peruse what we have said on this subject, xi. 18, and let him observe carefully what we shall say on xx. 12, 13. Suffice it to say here, that if the sacred writers reveal any fact with distinctness, it is this, viz., that the books were opened and that the judgment of the nations was begun when the kingdom of Christ commenced. The events were simultaneous. So Paul, in his address to the Athenians, (which we quote,) speaks of the two events as simultaneous : " God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things ; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation ;

that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us ; for in him we live, and move, and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent : because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained : whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii. 24—31. There are striking points of resemblance between the passage now quoted and the passage we are considering, viz., verses 6, 7. First, observe the subject of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. The angel flying through the midst of heaven is commissioned to preach the gospel to " every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ;" ver. 6. Paul says God " commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Second, observe the fact, that God is announced as the Creator of all things. The revelator calls on men to " worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Paul says : " God made the world, and all things therein." Third, observe the fact, that the judgment and the proclamation of the gospel are joined as it respects time. The revelator says the hour of God's judgment *is come*, in connection with the proclamation of the gospel. Paul says : " God commanded all men everywhere to repent, [i. e., he said, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel, is at hand,] because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." Fourth,

that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains

of waters.

8 And there followed another

observe this judgment is by the Lord Jesus Christ. The revelator represents it to be under the reign of Christ; for it was at the same time with the proclamation of the everlasting gospel; and Paul says God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is clearly a reference to Jesus Christ; and he said, "For judgment I am come into this world;" John ix. 39. The *day* God had appointed in the which he would judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, was the gospel *day*, referred to by Paul in the words, "Now is the accepted time, now is *the day* of salvation;" 2 Cor. vi. 2. Lastly, observe the motive which is advanced in each case why men should repent of their errors and sins, and worship God. The revelator says: "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come;" and Paul says: "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world," &c &c. From all these facts, there can be no dispute, that both the apostle Paul and the revelator were speaking of the call to the Gentiles, to turn from their idols, their errors and their sins, and worship God, the Creator of all things, because the hour, or time, of his judgment had come,—the time in which he would judge men in this world [John ix. 39] by the great principles of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This judgment is not a personal judgment; Christ is not visibly present; the mediatorial throne is not an outward, tangible throne; it is a judgment by the principles of Christ, which is now going on wherever the gospel is known. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that

I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day;" John xii. 48; [for gospel day, for that is called the last day; Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; Heb. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 5, 20; 2 Pet. iii. 3; 1 John ii. 18; Jude 18.] In certain cases, where it is said Christ shall judge men, it means his principles shall judge them, Christ being put metaphorically for the principles of his gospel, as Moses is put for the principles of the law. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John v. 45—47. Here evidently Moses is put for his principles. He accused the Jews by what he had said in his writings. Again: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them;" Luke xvi. 29. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead;" 31. Once more: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day;" Acts xv. 21. It must be evident to all that Moses is here put metaphorically for his principles.

8. *Another angel*.—Different from the one mentioned ver. 6. Both these are to be ranked among the angels of proclamation. See our classification under Rev. v. 2. ¶ *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*.—All the power of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, was combined to arrest the spread of the gospel. But notwithstanding all they had the power to do, the gospel flourished. The church on mount Zion [viz., the Jewish converts to Christianity] remained firm in their devotion to the Lamb, and the gospel was sent out, and prospered wondrously among the Gentiles. The spread of it could not be arrested. On the other hand, the

angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because

powers that opposed it were doomed to fall. The revelator shouts over the fall of Babylon. Babylon was a great city, the capital of Babylonia, or Chaldea. It was to this place that the Jews were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. See the 137th Psalm. In consequence of this event, the name Babylon became symbolical, among the Jews, for a state of suffering and calamity, as Sodom was symbolical of a place of great wickedness; and hence Jerusalem was spiritually called Sodom and Egypt; Rev. xi. 8. As in this place where Sodom is named, we know that Jerusalem is intended, so here where Babylon is named, Rome is intended. The Jews believed, from the time of the seventy years' captivity, that Babylon would be destroyed, in consequence of their detention in bondage. When that city fell, therefore, they esteemed it a judgment of God. Isaiah sung: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground;" xxi. 9. And Jeremiah takes up the same strain: "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed;" li. 8. Thus we see where the revelator found the language he employs, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." That Babylon is put for Rome in the Apocalypse, is placed beyond all doubt by what we find in the 17th chapter, where we are told that the woman Babylon, who sat upon the Roman beast, with seven heads and ten horns, [evidently the Roman Empire,] was "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth;" a description that would apply to no city on the earth at that time except Rome. Rome was "that great city," or empire, which had "made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." In the first of this chapter, viz., from verses 1—7, the revelator had shown what

she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her

was to happen to the church, both in its Jewish and Gentile branches; and he commences at ver. 8 [now before us] to describe *what was about to happen to her enemies* throughout the empire. This fall of Rome is to be understood in a somewhat different sense from the fall of Jerusalem. There was not such an utter devastation that not one stone was left upon another. It partook more of the character of a *moral* fall, as we learn from chap. xviii. 2: "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is not too strong a description of the wickedness of Rome. She did become "the habitation of devils;" she was "the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth;" xviii. 5. "She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;" i. e., she caused them to participate in her crimes and her punishments. The fall of Rome is more particularly described in chapters xvii. and xviii., and we shall treat of it again when we come to those sections. ¶ *Made all nations drink of the wine.*—She had power once, and she used it. She pressed all nations into her service; she infatuated them with zeal against Christianity, and made them partakers of her sins. Hence it is said she made all nations drink of her wine. Two qualities are attributed to wine in the Scriptures, the strengthening and the intoxicating quality. Used judiciously, by those in a weakly state, wine is beneficial; but if taken to excess, the effect is highly injurious. These contrary qualities will account for the apparently contradictory manner in which the sacred writers speak of wine. In the one case, it "is a mocker; and strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is

fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the

not wise;" Prov. xx. 1, and xxiii. 29; but in the other, "wine maketh glad the heart of man;" Ps. civ. 15, and we are told to give it to "him that is ready to perish;" Prov. xxxi. 6. Wine, like other medicines, if used judiciously, will be beneficial; if otherwise, it will be injurious, perhaps fatal. We see now why wine is made a metaphor for the influence of wicked men, as in the passage before us; it is because of its destructive qualities when taken in excess. It is said of the wicked: "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps;" Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. May not this description be justly applied to the wine of which Rome made the nations drink? The figure of the revelator in the verse before us seems to have been taken from Jeremiah. "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad;" li. 7. Such, evidently, was the passage which suggested the metaphor to the revelator's mind. He uses it repeatedly; see xvii. 2, 4. ¶ *Of the wrath of her fornication.* — Wrath here is put for the inflammatory nature of the wine, as if the phraseology had been, drink of the inflammatory wine of her fornication. If strong drink is raging, its qualities may well be described by wrath. Fornication, as we have repeatedly shown, is used metaphorically for idolatry. See our remarks on ver. 4 of this chapter. Purity in worship is represented as chastity, virginity; whereas the worship of idols is described by opposite terms. Rome made the nations drink of the

beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of

inflammatory, raging wine of her wickedness. She infuriated them by her example, and stimulated them by her power.

9. *Third angel.* — This again is one of the angels of proclamation. The first is mentioned ver. 6; the second ver. 8. ¶ *Worship the beast and his image.* — The beast here is the seven-headed beast, and his image the same as referred to xiii. 15. Worshipping the beast and his image means nothing more than paying allegiance and devotion to the beast himself. ¶ *Receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand.* — This is a reference to what is said xiii. 16, that the beast, which represented the false prophets, or teachers of the pagan religion, caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, i. e., all whom he could terrify into acquiescence, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. See the notes on that verse. The heathen nations, by whom the Jews were surrounded, were in the habit of receiving incisions, or marks, upon their bodies, to denote the class of idolaters to which they belonged, or the idol whom they adored. The Jews were forbidden to follow their custom. "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord;" Lev. xix. 28. Horne says, of the heathen: "A more frequent, and, indeed, very general custom, was the carrying of marks on their body in honor of the object of their worship. To this day, all the castes of the Hindoos bear on their foreheads, or elsewhere, what are called *the sectarian* marks, which not only distinguish them in a civil, but also in a religious point of view, from each other. Most of the barbarous nations lately discovered have their faces, arms, breasts, &c., curi-

the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without

ously carved, or *tattooed*, probably for superstitious purposes. Ancient writers abound with accounts of marks made on the face, arms, &c., in honor of different idols, — and to this the inspired penman alludes, (Rev. xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 9, 11; xv. 2; xvi. 2; xix. 20; xx. 4,) where false worshippers are represented as receiving in their hands, and in their forehead, the marks of the beast." — *Horne's Intro., Phil. Edition*, 1826; Vol. iii., p. 356.

10. *Drink of the wine of the wrath of God.* — We are now to see the punishment of those who received the mark of the beast in their foreheads, or their hands, i. e., of those who gave adherence wickedly to the power and practice of the empire in the persecution of the Christians. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God," &c. This is a metaphor of the Old Testament. The judgments of God on wicked men are said to be wine in a cup, red with wrath — mixed with nothing to dilute it, but with ingredients to make it stronger — which is to be drunk, even to the very dregs, by those who suffer the severity of God's judgments. "But God is the judge: he putteth down one and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them;" Psalms, lxxv. 7, 8. Again: "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out;" Isa. li. 17. The bold image of the cup of God's wrath, often employed by the sacred writers, is nowhere handled with greater force and sublimity than in this passage of Isaiah, verses 17—23. See Lowth on Isa., Note on li 21. In the verse before us, the wine of God's judgments is said to be "poured out without mixture," i. e., prepared with-

out any diluting or weakening, in the cup of his indignation. The enemies of the church were obliged to drink it; and as Isaiah says, "God made them drunk in his fury;" lxiii. 6. To drink of the cup of God's wrath is to suffer the judgments which he inflicts on men for their sins. This is made clear by Jeremiah: "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them;" xxv. 15, 16. The wine-cup of God's fury here was the judgment of the sword. The following passage, from the same chapter, is equally pertinent: "And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink. For lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts;" 28, 29. See, also, Rev. xvi. 19; xviii. 6. God's fury or judgments oftentimes madden men, and are therefore well compared to wine.

¶ *Tormented with fire and brimstone.* — This metaphor of fire and brimstone I apprehend, had its origin in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;" Gen. xix. 24; also, Luke xvii. 29. Here we have the germ from which the constant figure of the sacred writers in regard to the punishment of the wicked by fire and brimstone grew. See, also, Deut. xxix. 23: — "And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and

mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tor-

Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath." Being thus brought into use by Moses, the figure became somewhat common. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup;" *Psa. xi. 6.* The figure of "the lake of fire and brimstone" we shall consider when we come to the 19th, 20th and 21st chapters of the Apocalypse. That metaphor occurs nowhere but in the chapters now pointed out. But destruction by fire and brimstone, which is similar, is of more common occurrence in the Scriptures. The destruction of Idumea is thus described by Isaiah: "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever;" *Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10.* This punishment of fire and brimstone was not in the immortal state, but in the land of Idumea. Fire was one of the most common metaphors employed by the sacred writers to represent divine judgments. It occurs in all the prophets as well as in the books of the New Testament; but there is no proof that these judgments are to be endured in the immortal state. On the contrary, the language employed is often such as to forbid such a construction. See, for instance, *Ezk. xxii. 19—22.* "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath,

and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." It is not possible to conceive that this description of punishment by fire should be in the immortal state; and moreover it is expressly said to have been in "the midst of Jerusalem." It should be our earnest desire to ascertain the true sense of the Scriptures in these matters. ¶ *In the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.* Professor Stuart says, these words "must refer the punishment in question to the future world." "That the blessed in heaven have cognizance of the wicked and their sufferings seems to be plainly disclosed in *Luke xvi. 23—26.* And the consciousness on the part of malignant persecutors in the world of woe, that those whom they had pursued unto death were looking down on their torments, from a state of inconceivable happiness above, would doubtless be a circumstance of great aggravation." In these remarks we think the learned Professor has consulted his creed more than the word of God; and if it be not improper for him to offer such suggestions in the course of a commentary on the Apocalypse, it cannot be improper for us to consider them in this place. He is disposed to give the passage a literal interpretation. If he affixes to one part a literal sense, we see no reason why he should not give a like sense to the whole passage. What, then, is the scene before us if we understand the account literally? Men worship literally a beast and his image; they have his mark in their hands and on their foreheads; they drink of the wine of the wrath of God out of the cup of his indignation; and they are tormented with fire and brimstone in the literal sense, and the holy angels and the Lamb stand and look on eternally and contemplate the scene

mented with fire and brimstone | in the presence of the holy

Can any person believe that this is to be understood in the literal sense? If one part should be understood in that sense, we see no reason why the whole should not. But will any person take the ground that the whole should be so understood? On our part, we hold that the language is metaphorical; and that the words "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb," are as purely metaphorical as any other part. There should be a unity preserved in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, at least as far as possible. When we read that men "follow the Lamb;" xiv. 4; that "the Lamb stood on Mount Zion;" xiv. 1; that the Lamb led the believers to living fountains of water; vii. 17; that the great multitude stood before the Lamb; vii. 9; and that the four beasts and four-and-twenty elders "fell down before the Lamb;" v. 8; are we to understand these things literally or metaphorically? Surely we must adopt the last-named construction. Why, then, should it be alleged that we must understand the language literally when we read that the Roman persecutors were to be punished in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb? The learned professor to whom we have referred adduces this as sufficient proof that the punishment of the Roman persecutors shall be in the future state. Is it not possible that he may not be fully aware of the style in which the sacred writers speak of the divine presence? Let us examine a few passages in which the expressions "before God," or "before the Lord," and "presence of God," or "of the Lord," occur. 1st, Before God, means in *his sight*, or *supervision*, or *estimation*, in whatever place the thing referred to may be done. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before God; Gen. x. 9; evidently not in "the future world." The men of Sodom were sinners before God exceedingly; Gen. xiii. 13; that is, they were sin-

ners in his sight, or judgment; they had violated his statutes. 2d. To do a thing before God, is to do it with a *sense of his oversight* and of *accountability* to him. "I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger;" Deut. ix. 18. So the Jews were to eat before God; Idem, 12, 18. The descendants of Saul were hanged by the Gibeonites before the Lord; 2 Sam. xxi. 9. This certainly was not in "the future world." When the enemies were driven away by David, and the land was given into his hand, it was said "the land is subdued before the Lord and before his people;" 1 Chron. xxii. 18. The Jews, in their sacred festivals, eat and drank before the Lord; Idem, xxix. 22. See, also, Ezek. xlv. 3. The Psalmist said, "I will walk before the Lord in the *land of the living*;" cxvi. 9; which was certainly not in "the future world." The backsliding Jews "claimed to have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts;" Mal. iii. 14. Paul gave charge to Timothy "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ;" 2 Tim. iv. 1. 3d. Men were said to be "*before the Lord*" when they came to the temple to worship him, or assembled in any other place for the solemn services of prayer and praise. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God?" Micah vi. 6. "When shall I appear before God?" Ps. xlii. 2. "Every one in Zion appeareth before God;" Ps. lxxxiv. 7. But let us turn for a moment to consider the intent of the sacred writers when they use the word *presence*. God's presence went up with Moses out of Egypt; Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15. To be cut off from life was to be cut off from the presence of God; Lev. xxii. 3—a most singular statement if men can be found in the presence of

angels, and in the presence of the Lamb :

God only in "the future world." See, also, 2 Kings xiii. 23; xxiv. 20. To worship God was to come into his presence; his presence was in the temple; Psa. xc. 2; c. 2. So when the judgments of God came triumphantly, his presence is said to be with them; Isa. xix. 1. When men seek to flee away from responsibility, and from the discharge of their duty, they are said to flee away from the presence of the Lord. "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." "The men knew that he [Jonah] fled from the presence of the Lord because he had told them;" Jonah i. 3, 10. These are but a few out of the multitude of texts that might be quoted to illustrate the phraseology of the sacred writers in regard to the divine presence. And there is one fact to which we desire to call special attention, viz., the divine judgments, above all things else, are said to take place in the divine presence, even in cases where it is known and acknowledged of all men that the judgments are in the present life. How strictly in agreement is it, then, with the style of the sacred writers, to represent the punishment of the Roman persecutors in fire and brimstone, as being "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." We are confident that Professor Stuart, if he had looked into this subject as impartially and as fully as he has into many others, could not have regarded this phraseology as proof that the punishment must be in the future world. "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it;" Isa. xix. 1. Here the presence of the Lord is said to accompany his fiery judgments. Again: "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the

melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil. to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence. When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence;" Isa. lxiv. 1—3. Here, again, God's presence accompanies his judgments; these judgments were evidently in the present world, on the earth. God is said *to come*, that is, to *be present*, when his enemies are punished. This is also true of the Lord Jesus Christ. How frequently do we read in the New Testament of his coming to judge and punish his enemies. He comes too, *with his angels*; Matt. xiii. 39, 41, 49; xvi. 27; xxv. 31; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 36; 2 Thess. i. 7. Jesus and his angels are present in the judgment — i. e., such is the figurative language of the Scriptures. Although Jesus is represented under the metaphor of the Lamb to show his meekness; Acts viii. 32; and to shadow forth the sacrificial character of his death; John i. 29; 1 Peter i. 19; still he is present also in his judgments in that character. Hence we read of "the wrath of the Lamb;" Rev. vi. 16. Why should we be surprised, then, to be told, that the temporal judgments of his enemies are inflicted "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb?" Things manifestly belonging to this world are said to be done in the presence of Jesus and the angels. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men;" 1 Cor. iv. 9. Paul to Timothy said: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality;" 1 Epis. v. 21. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" 1 Thess. ii. 19. Thus we see

## 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever

that as the angels and the Lamb are said metaphorically to be present to observe the doings of men on earth, and especially in the infliction of judgments, nothing could be more natural than to speak of those judgments as being inflicted in their presence. If there are any, after all, who suppose that the wine of the wrath of God is to be administered to the Roman persecutors in the immortal or post-mortem state, let them observe, that the voice from heaven said to the seven angels who had the seven *last* plagues, in which was *filled up* the wrath of God, (xv. 1,) "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God *upon the earth*." (xvi. 1.) This is the fulfilment of what is predicted riv. 10. The wrath of God is described as an infuriating liquid, in xiv. 10, and there said to be contained in a cup; but in xv. 7, and xvi. 1, it is represented as being in vials. In xvi. 19, the revelator goes back to the figure of the cup again: "And great Babylon (Rome) came in remembrance before God, to give unto *her* the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The metaphor of the succeeding verse (xvi. 20) is precisely such as was applied to temporal punishments, vi. 14. To sum up in a few words: the wine of the wrath of God, mentioned xiv. 10, has seven vials prepared to receive it; see xv. 1; these vials "full of the wrath of God" are put into the hands of the seven angels; see xv. 7; and these angels were directed to pour them out *upon the earth*; xvi. 1. That this is the same thing as the cup of the wine of God's wrath is fully proved by xvi. 19. And what the plagues of the seven vials were is distinctly shown in xviii. 8: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." These judgments are of such a nature that they must certainly have been

endured on the earth. For further remarks I direct the reader to the comments on xix. 20, where similar phraseology from the pen of the revelator is found. We submit it, then, to the candid reader, whether it afford any proof that punishment must be in the future state, merely because it is said to take place "in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb." Observe, the question here is not whether the doctrine of future punishment be true; that question we have discussed nowhere in this Commentary, neither shall we discuss it. The question simply has been, whether the verse before us (Rev. xiv. 10) refers to a future state of punishment. For further remarks, see our note on verse 20 of this chapter.

11. *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up.*—This is but a continuation of the imagery; it adds nothing to the fact. As the punishment had been represented as being in fire and brimstone, it was natural for the revelator to heighten his imagery by speaking of the smoke ascending. ¶ *Forever and ever.*—The term "forever and ever" is very frequently applied in the Scriptures to the continuance of temporal things, without any reference to the future state. It is the translation of one of the combinations of the Greek word *aion*, which does not necessarily signify endless duration. In fact, there seems no room to doubt, that this expression of the revelator was borrowed from Isaiah's description of the punishment of Idumea, in which it is said, "*the smoke thereof shall go up forever*;" chap. xxxiv. 10; or, as the revelator has it, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." It is certain that the punishment of Idumea was on *the earth*; and by what sound rule of interpretation can we apply the language of the revelator to the immortal state, if we apply that of Isaiah to the destruction of Idumea?

and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who wor-

The above argument seems to us conclusive; and therefore we add nothing further in this place; but as to the fact that *aion* in all its forms is used to describe the continuance of temporal judgments, we might, if necessary, extend the proofs and illustrations to great length. So far was the argument extended, in the form in which our Commentary on the Apocalypse was first published. But we esteem it proper here, where we have more room, to extend it. Any person who looks at the common version alone, must be satisfied that no dependence can be placed on the phrase "forever and ever" to prove the endless duration of punishment. We do not deny that it is sometimes used to signify endless duration; it is equally apparent that it is also used in cases where it cannot have that sense. The force to be given to the phrase must therefore depend, in all cases, on the subject to which it is applied. That it is frequently used in the limited sense will be made certain to the mind of every person who will carefully consider the following facts. We will analyze the expression, and consider the Scriptural use, 1st of Ever, 2d of Forever, and 3d of Forever and ever. And, 1st, **EVER**: The fire was ever burning on the altar; Lev. vi. 13; David ever had a sense of his sins; Psal. li. 3; the word is applied to the threshing of corn; Isa. xxviii. 28; to the continuance of the bounds of Zion, xxxiii. 20; the brother of the prodigal was ever with his father; Luke xv. 31; Jesus ever taught in the synagogue; John xviii. 20—which could not have been longer than his life at the most; and some were ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth; 2 Tim. iii. 7. From these quotations it must be evident to every person, that the word *ever* is frequently used in the common version in cases where endless duration was not intended. 2d, **FOREVER**: This word is used in so many instances where the sense can-

not be that of endless duration, that we shall hardly do justice to the whole by the few references we shall make. It is applied to the Jewish possession of the land of Canaan; Gen. xiii. 15; Exod. xxxii. 13; Josh. xiv. 9—to the Mosaic ordinances; Exod. xii. 14, 24; Numbers x. 8—to the bondage of the Hebrew slaves; Exod. xxi. 6; Lev. xxv. 46; Dent. xv. 17—to the ownership of a house; Lev. xxv. 30—to a structure of stones, a monumental memorial; Josh. iv. 7—to the continuance of the disease of leprosy in a family; 2 Kings v. 27, &c. &c. What can be more plain, than that the Jews were accustomed to use the phrase *forever* in application to things of known and undeniable earthly character that long ago had an end? If, then, both the phrases, *ever* and *forever*, are unquestionably used separately in numerous instances, in cases where only earthly or limited duration could have been intended, can it be possible that when they are combined, they invariably signify endless duration? On the contrary, it is certain that *forever and ever* is used where nothing but earthly or limited duration is intended. See the following: 3d, **FOREVER AND EVER**: This phrase is applied by the sacred writers to earthly life, or "length of days;" Psal. xxi. 4—to the duration of a book; Isa. xxx. 8—to the residence of the Jews in Canaan; Jer. vii. 7; xxv. 5; out of which they were long ago expelled; and also to the temporal punishment of Idumea, the streams of which were turned into *pitch*, the dust thereof into *brimstone*, and the land thereof was made "burning pitch." This judgment is described as having been by fire and brimstone; and yet the merest tyro in Scripture criticism would know, that it was simply a highly wrought metaphor to describe the desolation produced in the land by the judgments of God. "It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof

ship the, beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the

mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of

shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste: none shall pass through it forever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be a habitation of dragons, and a court for owls;" Isa. xxxiv. 10—13. This punishment, although it was said to endure forever and ever, we know cannot be in the future and immortal world; but was a temporal judgment on a section of the sinful earth. "It would be very unreasonable (say the editors of the Improved Version) to infer the gloomy doctrine of eternal misery from the loose and figurative language of a prophetic vision, in opposition to the plainest dictates of reason and justice, and to the whole tenor of divine revelation. But if any one is disposed to lay undue stress upon this text, it may be sufficient to remark, that it is not here asserted that the torment continues, but that the smoke of it ascends forever and ever. The smoke of a pile in which a criminal has been condemned may continue to ascend long after the wretched victim has ceased to suffer. And a memorial of the punishment which has been inflicted on vice may remain long after vice itself has been utterly exterminated. After all, as the prophecy relates wholly to the states of things in the present world, the punishments threatened ought, in all reason, to be understood of temporal punishments, and not of the sufferings of a future life. So in Jude, ver. 7, Sodom and Gomorrah are represented as suffering the vengeance

of eternal fire, i. e., of a temporal calamity, a fire which completely destroyed them." Note on Rev. xiv. 11. As the case of Sodom and Gomorrah is here referred to, and as it is a similar case to that of the Roman persecutors spoken of in the Apocalypse, we give the opinion of the learned Dr. Whitby, himself a strong believer in endless misery, as to the extent of the torment intended by the phrase "eternal fire." "That this is spoken not of the cities themselves, but of the inhabitants which dwelt in them,—that is, of them who had *given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh*,—is evident; but yet I conceive they are said to *suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*, not because their souls are at present punished in hell fire, but because they, and their cities, perished from that fire from heaven, which brought a perpetual and irreparable destruction on them and their cities." "*To deigma, an example*, is to be taken from something visible to, or knowable by, all who were to be terrified by it, especially when it is an *example manifested* and proposed. Now such was not the punishment of their souls in hell fire; but nothing was more known and celebrated among authors, sacred and profane, Jewish, Christian, and heathen writers, than the fire that fell down upon Pentapolis, or the five cities of Sodom, they being mentioned still in Scripture as the cities which God overthrew with a perpetual desolation." — See Whitby's Com. on Jude, ver. 7.

12. *Here is the patience of the saints.*

—That is, the worshippers of the beast are put down; they are destroyed; they can aid in the persecution of the Christians no more; this is the cause of the patience of the saints, and of those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. In xiii. 10, we found similar words: "Here is the patience

the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God,

and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from

and the faith of the saints;" referring back to the preceding words, viz., the punishment of the Roman persecutors. So in the words before us, the allusion is to the preceding words, and to the punishment of the Roman persecutors, as described in verses 9—11.

13. *Voice from heaven.*—Any communication from heaven to men was said to come by the voice of the Lord from heaven, even when no words were actually spoken. Voice is often used metaphorically, as of Abel's blood; Gen. iv. 10; voice of a sign; Exod. iv. 8; the thunder is God's voice; Job xxxvii. 4, 5; xl. 9, &c., &c. ¶ *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*—This passage is difficult of construction, as is agreed by persons of all sects. There are several questions of great importance involved: 1st. In what sense are the dead here mentioned? Are they the dead to sin, such as have been crucified with Christ? or are they the actually and literally dead? 2d. Why is it said, blessed are they *from henceforth*? The other questions, 3d. In what sense do they rest from their labors? and 4th. In what sense do their works follow them? depend much on the answer given to the first question. The usual interpretation of the passage is: "Blessed are the dead who die (i. e., pass away from the world) *from henceforth*, as it will be a time of great persecution, and the dead in Christ are to be regarded as happy rather than the living. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they are relieved from their sufferings, and their works follow them to the immortal state, where they will be suitably rewarded. But it is fatal to this interpretation, that it was not a time of persecution of the church that the revelator was describing, but the time of the punishment of the enemies of Christianity, and their final over-

throw. Lightfoot says: "And now, as in the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th chapters, the relation is concerning those things that should be against the church,—from henceforth the prophecy is more especially of things that make *for* the church and *against* her enemies' works;" iii. 351. Examine the context, and the truth of this will be seen. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen;" ver. 8. The worshippers of the beast are made to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and are tormented with fire and brimstone; ver. 10; evidently describing the fall of the persecutors. "Here is the patience of the saints;" ver. 12; i. e., this has caused the patience of the saints, and of those that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And then follow the words: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*;" i. e., it seems to us, things are to be different *henceforth* from what they have been *heretofore*. The past has been a time of persecution; but soon the power of the persecutor will be broken; and from that time, *from henceforth*, the Christians will be blessed; they will have rest, when their persecutors are overthrown, and their works of triumph shall attend them wherever they go. Blessed are the dead in Christ, those who are crucified with him "*from henceforth*,"—from the time the revelator was describing,—because the power of the oppressor was broken. Blessed, in a peculiar manner, are those who become united to Christ from that time; for they rest from their labors, viz., their toils and sufferings, whereas previous to this time the Christians had been compelled to suffer great afflictions and some of them horrid deaths. But from the time that the revelator was describing, they were to have a season of comparative peace, and their works, their glorious

heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die

works, would not be prevented, but would attend them wherever they might go.

It is settled beyond all dispute, that leath is used in the Scriptures in the literal, and also in the metaphorical, or moral sense. It is equally well settled, that even in the moral sense the distinction is subdivided, for we read both of a death *in* sin and a death *to* sin. Take a few examples, from the Scriptures, of the use of the figure in both senses. "Shall die in his iniquity;" Ezk. iii. 19; "Die in his iniquity;" xviii. 18; "Die in your sins;" John viii. 21; "Dead in trespasses and sins;" Eph. ii. 45; "Being dead in your sins;" Col. ii. 13. For the other sense, viz., death *to* sin, see the following: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death?" Rom. vi. 3; "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;" ver. 6; "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" ver. 11; "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances;" Col. ii. 20; "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him;" 2 Tim. ii. 11; "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness;" 1 Peter ii. 24. These passages make it abundantly evident, that believers are said to be in a state of moral death — death to sin. They are said to be in Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" 2 Cor. v. 17. They are said to be dead with him; to be crucified with him; to be buried with him; to be "baptized into his death." According to these figures of speech, to die in the Lord is to die to sin in

him, in his faith, and his spirit, — to be buried with him by spiritual baptism. The revelator had spoken of the dead in error and sin, in xi. 18: "And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged," &c.; i. e., the time of their judgment had come. In the case before us, he speaks of the other class of the dead, viz., the dead in the Lord, those who had been buried with him by baptism into his death. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth*;" i. e., as the power of the oppressor was contemplated as broken, — as Babylon was contemplated as fallen, — as the worshippers of the beast were tormented, — so the Christians for a time would enjoy peace. Blessed, then, from henceforth, (said the revelator,) are those who shall die in the Lord; meaning, as we think, after the sense in which Paul sets forth the matter to the Romans, chap. vi.

*For they rest from their labors, (Kopon,) their toils, trials and troubles.* This rest was precisely what the Christians were promised when their enemies were put down. In fact, all Christians are said, in a certain sense, to rest from their works. See the words of St. Paul: "There remaineth, therefore, a *rest* to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, *he also hath ceased from his own works, (ton ergon,)* as God did from his;" Heb. iv. 9, 10. Do we not find something here parallel to the passage in Revelations? When that great persecutor Saul was converted, "then had the churches *rest* throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria;" Acts ix. 31. The Thessalonians had suffered for the kingdom of God's sake. The time of the destruction of their enemies was about to come; and Paul said to them, "And to you who are troubled, *rest* with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," &c., &c.; 2 Thess. i. 7. They rested from their labors and

in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they

sufferings when their enemies were punished ; and this, it seems to us, is precisely the idea given in Rev. xiv. 13 : "Blessed are they who die in the Lord *from henceforth*," from the time of the overthrow of Christ's enemies. "Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors," as the churches had rest at the conversion of Saul, and as the Christians generally had rest at the time the kingdom of Christ came with power, and he took vengeance on his enemies. ¶ *For their works do follow them* ; — or go with them. They held fast their faith, and their efforts were crowned with success. The revelator was obliged to reprove the church at Ephesus, because it had forsaken its *first works* ; Rev. ii. 15 ; which they were required to keep unto the end. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations ;" Rev. ii. 26. Here it is evident that the Christians were required to be faithful ; and in being so, their good works continually went with them. Some were faithful, and did not do their *first works*. David said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever ;" Ps. xxiii. 6 ; i. e., goodness and mercy shall attend me wherever I go. The works of the faithful Christians, the fame of their works, and the power of them, attended them wherever they went. This was precisely the case with the early faithful Christians, when they rested so far from their labors and sufferings that they could work to advantage in the cause of Christ. See the words of Mark : "And these signs shall *follow them that believe*, [their works shall follow them :] In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working *with them*, and confirming the word with *signs following* ;" xvi. 17—20. The Greek word translated "works" in Rev. xiv. 13, is applied to the wonderful works of Christ and his apostles in repeated instances. John heard while in prison *the works* of Christ ; Matt. xi. 2. Jesus was a prophet "mighty in deed (*en ergo*) and word ;" Luke xxiv. 19. See, also, John v. 20, 36 ; vii. 3 ; x. 25, 38, in all which places the word is *ergon*. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord [the Christians who are dead to sin while in Christ] from henceforth : [because the power of the persecutor is broken ;] Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors," their toils and sufferings, as the Thessalonian Christians rested when Christ came to take vengeance on his enemies ; "and their works do follow them ;" i. e., if they are faithful, the fame of their purity and their wonderful deeds, as signs of their faith, shall attend them wherever they go. This seems to us to be a reasonable construction of the passage. It is based upon facts that we know did exist ; and the language employed in describing those facts is similar, in other parts of the New Testament, to the language of the passage before us. We are sustained therefore in our view by the analogy of interpretation. But in addition to all, we think the force of the context leads directly to the construction we have given. The hour of God's judgment was announced as having come ; verse 7. The revelator then proclaims, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen ;" ver. 8 ; and then follows an account of the punishment of the persecutors of Christianity, who were tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and of the

may rest from their labors; and | their works do follow them.

Lamb; and these had no *rest* day nor night, vers. 10, 11. This had given patience to the saints, ver. 12. Then follow immediately the words, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, for *they rest* [the worshippers of the beast had no rest] from their labors, and their works do follow them." Why should the *want of rest* to the persecutors be considered as belonging to *this world*, and *the rest* enjoyed by the Christians as belonging to the immortal state? Would the context lead us to apply the passage to that state? We think not.

Certain other considerations deserve our attention in this place. Did not the Christians rest from their labors in this life, when their enemies were destroyed? Did not their works follow them in this life, when, by the overthrow of their persecutors, they were enabled to persevere in their duty without hindrance? If such things actually transpired in this world, why need we seek for the fulfilment of the passage in the future state? But there seem to us to be some difficulties in applying the passage to the future state, which have not been generally apprehended. Why should it be said the Christians rest from their toils in the state of the dead more than others? Do not all men rest from their toils there? Death, surely, is a state of rest to all. And besides, what idea can we get of men's works following them, or going with them into the immortal world? The common idea is that the works follow them there in the shape of rewards. But this is certainly a very strange construction; for there is not one word said in the verse about *reward* that we can discover. But on our construction of the passage, the meaning seems rational. The Christians, when their enemies were put down, rested from their toils, but their enemies had *no rest*, day nor night; and as to the former, their works fol-

lowed with them, i. e., they were enabled, by the abatement of persecution, to preach the gospel and labor more diligently, and do those works which followed such as truly believed wheresoever they travelled. But if, after all, the reader supposes, that to "die in the Lord" signifies to pass into the immortal state, then let him consider the following remarks, published about three years since, by Rev. Asher Moore, of Philadelphia:

"But here we shall be reminded that there is an important part of the passage, concerning which we have thus far said nothing:—'*And their works do follow them.*' Are we to conclude from this expression that the works of the persons spoken of actually follow them into the future state of existence, and there continue with them? What are the works of men in this world? even the best of men—the very martyrs to the cause of Christ? The voice of inspiration declares, and all human experience confirms the fact, that '*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*' And let us suppose that a company of the best men have passed away from this life, and now stand before God in the spiritual world. *Their works* are with them, and these works are exhibited in the presence of the Almighty. Well, what is the amount of these works? To say nothing in regard to an *eternal weight of merit*, let us inquire whether these godly men have in all respects ever performed their *duty*? If they have in any wise been remiss in simple duty, it is in vain to talk of their great *merit*. Our Saviour said to his immediate disciples: 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are *unprofitable* servants; we have done that which was our *duty* to do.' But this company of good men cannot even say that they have done their *duty*; and they are therefore worse than unprofitable. Their best deeds fall far short of the

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son

of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

perfect righteousness required by the divine law; while their *sins* are many and great. And though just and true, compared with other men, they are obliged to confess, after all, that salvation is *not of works*, but the free gift of God's grace! But we do not believe that the revelator meant, in the passage before us, to furnish any information concerning works that follow men into the spiritual and immortal world. The works of a man may follow him, and be known in the world, after he has ceased from his labors. Thus, St. Paul says of righteous Abel, Heb. xi. 4: 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he, being dead, *yet speaketh*.' Now, in the very same sense that Abel's *speech* continued after he was dead, did the *works* of the persons mentioned by St. John *follow them*. Being dead, *they yet work*; and the fruits of their labors are seen and known and enjoyed wherever man is blessed with the hopes and comforts of that religion, in behalf of which they did not count their lives dear unto themselves. Though they were put to death, their *works* were not destroyed; but their influence still continues, as Abel *speaks* by his righteous example to the sons of men. Solomon says, 'The memory of the just is blessed.' It lives in the hearts of posterity. And while we witness the continuance of the faithful labors of those devoted and self-sacrificing servants of God who laid down their lives in the service of Christ, we revere their toils, and cherish their memory with grateful feelings. Their works live with us; and while 'the name of the wicked shall rot,' the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

14. *Behold, a white cloud.*—It is a very common figure in the Bible to speak of God coming in the clouds. His descent at the giving of the law was in a cloud, which veiled him from the sight of the people; Exod. xvi. 10; xix. 9; xxxiv. 5. He accompanied Israel in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, the latter being more distinctly visible in the darkness. God, it is said, maketh the clouds his chariot; Psal. civ. 3; and hence saith Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it;" xix. 1. The coming of Christ to judgment, after the custom of the ancient Jewish writers, is said to be in the clouds. So Daniel prophesied of the coming of the Son of man; vii. 13. So Christ himself described his coming; Matt. xxiv. 30; and the same figure is used in the communication to the revelator; i. 7. ¶ *Son of man*—The revelator having shown that the persecutors of the church and worshippers of the beast had no rest, day nor night, but were to be destroyed, while the Christians rested from their labors and toils, he proceeds to speak further of the judgment of these persecutors under the figure of a harvest; and in the first place he describes the reaper. The Son of man appears upon a cloud, having on his head a crown, (as king in Zion,) and having in his hand a sharp sickle. He who hath the sickle is the reaper, and the sign of the sickle shows that the harvest is ripe. The coming of the Son of man took place at the end of the Jewish age, or world, when he rendered to men according to their works; Matt. xvi. 27, 28.

15. *Another angel came out of the temple.*—Lightfoot states, "It is ob-

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come

servable that the word for reaping of the earth comes out from the temple; yea, though Christ have the sickle in his hand, yet an angel out of the temple calls to him to reap; and another angel comes out of the temple with a sickle; and a third out of the temple calls to him to reap. As this may be understood to doctrinal information, that the cries and urgencies of the church to Christ stir him up to avenge them on their enemies, (Luke xviii. 7,) so the expressions may be explained by an allusive application. The putting in of the first sickle, to reap the first corn in Judea, was by the word and warrant of the priests and rulers sitting in the temple; and they that were to reap, when they were come to the corn, put not in the sickle, till the word was given—Reap.”—(Works iii. 351, 352.) Hence the angel that came out of the temple cries to him that sat on the cloud, (who seems to be waiting for the command,) “Thrust in thy sickle and reap.” ¶ *Harvest of the earth is ripe.*—The ripeness of the harvest denotes that the people were exceedingly wicked, and that the full time of their destruction had come. See the language of Joel, which the revelator seems to have copied. “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great;” Joel iii. 13. This settles the point, that by the ripeness of the harvest is intended that the enemies of the church had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and nothing remained to them but to be destroyed. But once more: “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the

for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

time of her harvest shall come;” Jer. li. 33. The same figure was employed to describe the punishment of the Jews. “The harvest is the end of the world [or age] and the reapers are the angels;” Matt. xiii. 39. “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;” 40—42. Such was the description of the punishment of the Jews. The fire in which they were burned was a metaphor to represent the judgments that fell upon their city. “The Lord’s fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem;” Isaiah xxxi. 9; and we have already showed that Jerusalem was described as a furnace, and the people as metals that were to be gathered therein, and melted and purified as gold and silver by the fire. See Ezk. xxii. 19—22, already quoted.

16. *And the earth was reaped.*—How appropriate, in view of all that we have said, was it to represent the destruction of the Romans by the reaping of the harvest. This destruction did not perhaps fall upon them all at once; but it was to happen at no very distant day, and formed a part of the divine plan of operations in ushering the gospel into the world. Let us proceed now to the consideration of the metaphor of the vintage.

17. *Another angel came out of the temple.*—The same form of the scenery is kept up. The second angel with the sickle comes from the temple like the first. The sickles in both cases were sharp and ready for service. The same facts which had been rep-

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had

power over fire; and cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

resented under the metaphor of the harvest, are now to be represented under the figure of the vintage.

18. *Angel came out from the altar.*—This is one of the angels of the elements; see the classification mentioned in our note under v. 2. He comes from the altar, where fire was kept continually burning. ¶ *Power over fire.*—That is, the fire of the altar. “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out;” Lev. vi. 13. ¶ *Cried with a loud cry.*—All the voices from heaven, and from the temple, (and these terms are sometimes used synonymously,) are described as voices of great power; for the reason that they are effective, majestic, and command the obedience of all men. The thunder is sometimes described as God’s voice; Job xxxvii. 4, 5; Psal. lxxvii. 18; civ. 7. God’s voice is a mighty voice; Psal. lxxviii. 33. Any voice announcing just recompense for sin seems to have been called the voice of the Lord; Isa. lxvi. 6. The voice of the Lord is like the sound of many waters, as of the roaring sea, or a mighty cataract. Such a comparison is truly sublime. See Ezk. i. 24; xliii. 2. It was as the voice of a multitude; Dan. x. 6; which shakes not only the earth, but heaven also; Heb. xii. 26. These metaphors and comparisons are all employed by the revelator. See i. 15; v. 2, 12; viii. 13; x. 3; xi. 15; xii. 10; xiv. 2; xvi. 17. ¶ *Thrust in thy sharp sickle.*—Here the command comes from the temple again, before the gathering of the clusters was commenced. ¶ *Vine of the earth.*—What is the accustomed metaphorical use which the sacred writers make of the vine? We will see. The cultivation of the vine was early known. It was

transplanted from place to place, and with proper care might even be carried a great distance without losing its life. Hence it was used to represent a people removed from one place to another. The Jews were a vine, brought out of Egypt, carried to Canaan, and planted there, after the heathen were driven out. “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river;” Psal. lxxx 8—11. Isaiah speaks of a vineyard which God planted. He looked for good grapes, and behold it brought forth wild grapes. The prophet explains his allegory by saying: “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry;” Isa. v. 7. Jeremiah says to Israel, “Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” ii. 21. See, also, Hosea x. 1. It is apparent, then, that the prophets used the metaphor of the vine to represent the house of Israel, or nation of the Jews. In the Apocalypse, the vine stands for the Romans, and occurs only in xiv. 18, 19. ¶ *Her grapes are fully ripe.*—This denotes that the wickedness of the people was full. “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth,

their wickedness is great;" Joel iii. 13. See the remarks under verse 15. Every abomination prevailed among the Romans. They worshipped the beast and his image, and received his mark on their right hands and foreheads; they had no rest day nor night, save the few who had embraced the religion of Jesus, taken up the cross, and been crucified with him—they rested from their labors, and their good works followed them.

19. *Great wine-press of the wrath of God.*—To tread a people as in a wine-press, was to surround them, to crush, destroy, and extirpate them. See the following passage. "The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck; he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up. The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me; he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a wine-press. For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me; my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed;" Lam. i. 14—16. The wine-press of the wrath of God was the wine-press of his judgments.

20. *And the wine-press was trodden.*—To tread the wine-press is, of course, to crush the enemy. The manner of crushing grapes among the Jews was to put them into the vat, or press, and then place men among them to tread upon them. The garments of such must, of course, be stained somewhat of the color of blood. "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone;

and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine-press was

and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come;" Isa. lxiii. 2—4. This metaphor was perhaps used by Isaiah to represent the destruction of the Jews, in the days of vengeance, at the coming of Christ. See Lowth on the place. But, according to Adam Clarke, "Kimchi interprets the whole of the destruction of Rome." The latter is the true application of the metaphor in the Apocalypse. See xix. 13, 15. ¶ *Without the city.*—When it is said the wine-press was trodden "without the city," it has reference, we think, to the custom of the Israelites, that men who were disgraced should be put out of the city. Punishments eminently disgraceful were inflicted without the city. The custom originated on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. Those who were infected with the plague and leprosy were obliged to dwell *without the camp*; Lev. xiii. 46; Numb. v. 3. The punishment of stoning to death was inflicted without the camp; Numb. xv. 35. It was a disgrace, therefore, to be obliged to dwell without the camp, or to suffer punishments there. Hence we read in Hebrews: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the gate;" xiii. 11—13. The meaning is, we will suffer reproach for the name of Christ. The Romans were to be punished in a manner to bring upon them the greatest disgrace. ¶ *Blood came out of the wine-press.*—Here the figure

trodden without the city, and

is slightly changed. The juice of the grape becomes blood, and it flows in immense quantities, even to the horses' bridles. Does not this denote that the Romans were to be afflicted with bloody wars? Bishop Newton says, "It is said (ver. 20) that 'the blood came even unto the horse-bridles,' which is a strong hyperbolic way of speaking to express vast slaughter and effusion of blood; a way of speaking not unknown to the Jews; for the Jerusalem Talmud, describing the woful slaughter which the Roman Emperor Adrian made of the Jews at the destruction of the city of Bitter, saith, 'that the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils.' Nor are similar examples wanting even in the classic authors: for Silius Italicus, speaking of Hannibal's descent into Italy, useth a like expression, of 'the bridles flowing with much blood;' Sil. Ital. iii. 705." Destructive wars are described by the flowing of great quantities of blood; and in the hyperbolic language of the Apocalypse, it flows even "to the horse-bridles" for the space of sixteen hundred furlongs. It is a strong hyperbole, like that in John xxi. 25; viz., that if the acts of Jesus were all written, "the world itself could not contain the books." The oriental writers abounded in hyperboles; and the two to which we have now referred are perhaps the most striking in all the Scriptures. We infer nothing from the verse before us, than that great slaughter was intended. Judgments, especially such as came in the form of war, are represented under the metaphor of blood. The figure perhaps originated in what is said Exod. vii. 17. The success of Israel against their enemies is described by saying, they shall "drink the blood of the slain;" Numb. xxiii. 24. The garments of warriors are rolled in blood; Isaiah ix. 5. At the destruction of Idumea, the mountains were said to melt with blood; Isa. xxxiv. 3. The destruction of Egypt

blood came out of the wine-

is described in the following terms by Ezekiel: "Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee. And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light;" xxxii. 4—7. When we come to the Apocalypse, we find the same prophetic metaphors kept up; for that book bears a more striking resemblance to the books of the Old Testament, especially those of the prophets, than to any book of the New Testament. The moon turns to blood; vi. 12. One judgment was described as hail and fire mingled with blood: and the "third part of the sea became blood;" viii. 7, 8; the two witnesses had the power to turn the waters to blood, which is described as "smiting the earth with all plagues;" xi. 6; God gave the Romans "blood to drink," because they had shed the blood of saints; xvi. 6; the murderous cruelty of the Romans was described by the woman, the "great harlot," being drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs; xvii. 6; and Jesus, king of kings, when he rode forth to judge the Romans, was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; xix. 13. So much for the use of the metaphor of blood. The hyperboles are, some of them, exceedingly bold. Having thus brought our comments on this chapter to a close, we observe, that we see clearly what was the judgment denounced in verses 9—11, under the metaphors of the wine of the wrath of God, and of torment in fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy

press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

## CHAPTER XV.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvel-

angels and the Lamb. Those judgments are described more particularly in verses 14—20. The Son of man and his angels are represented as being present. He comes upon a white cloud, with a sharp sickle. The harvest of the earth is ripe; the clusters of the grapes are ready to be gathered in; the "wine of the wrath of God" is to be poured out from the "wine-press of the wrath of God." The figure is then slightly changed, and the wine turns to blood to represent the dreadful slaughter with which the enemies of Christ were supposed to be overthrown. Who can suppose this is descriptive of judgments in the immortal state? Look at xix. 13—21. There we shall find similar figures occurring again. Jesus treadeth the "wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God;" but that this represents the punishment of men on the earth, is evident, because the fowls are called to eat their flesh, a metaphor which is never applied by any writer that we know of, sacred or profane, to the spirit-world. Several of the remaining chapters will be found only to carry out, in a more extended form, the subjects embraced in this.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Preliminary Remarks.*—We must now expect, for several chapters, only the same subjects which were hinted at in the 14th chapter. They are carried out in a more enlarged form, which will appear as we proceed. This, let it be remembered, was precisely the manner of the revelator in treating of the judgments upon the Jews. He gave, in chapter sixth, a synopsis or general view of those judgments, and then proceeded in subsequent chapters to fill up his plan more completely. Thus the harmony of his design is preserved. We

noticed, when examining the 14th chapter, that he treated of the spread of the gospel among the Jews; the preaching of it to the Gentiles; the punishment of the persecutors, who were to have no rest "day nor night;" and the rest that was to be enjoyed by those who had been crucified with Christ. In the 15th chapter we shall find an account of the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, and the preparations that were made for visiting the wrath of God upon those who persecuted the Gentile Christians.

1. *I saw another sign.*—Everything in this chapter is remarkably scenic. This introduction of another sign was only in fulfilment of the revelator's general plan, of representing in a dramatic manner the events which he knew were to take place. It was made known to him that a new order of judgments was about to fall, to wit, the judgments on the Roman persecutors; and this he describes by saying: "I saw another sign in heaven," &c. The word *semeion*, rendered "sign," signifies, among other senses, a portent, a prodigy, or extraordinary occurrence, representing or portending somewhat else. See Parkhurst and other lexicographers. As if the revelator had said, I saw another wonder, or prodigy, the forerunner of great events.

¶ *Great and marvellous.*—For these reasons it is called "great and marvellous." The language which the revelator here applies to the destruction of Rome is similar to that which was used by our Lord in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke xxi. 11, 25: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." See xvi. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 18—21, where more distinct metaphorical allusions are made to signs in the sun, air, sea,

lous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them

waters, islands, mountains, &c., &c.

¶ *Seven angels.* — What was the sign, great and marvellous, which the revelator saw? Ans. "Seven angels having the seven last plagues;" and here let it be observed, this is merely scenic, or imaginary. John unquestionably stated the truth; but we must take it in his own dress. The facts he was *instructed* to give; the imagery *was his own*; but this in a great part he borrowed from other portions of the Scriptures, especially the prophets. We say with Dr. Doddridge on another part of the Apocalypse, John's images "represented in a figurative manner things that did really exist. And though it is possible that ærial scenes might, by divine or angelic power, have been formed, I think it much more probable, that all that passed was purely in the *imagination* of St. John." — See Doddridge on Rev. iv. 2, in his Expositor. We have now before us another series of *seven* angels. The former series (viii. 2, 6) had seven trumpets to sound; these have "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God." There is somewhat of a similarity in the imagery in these two cases. ¶ *Having the seven last plagues.* — The plague, strictly speaking, was a disease which God was supposed to have sent upon men in his wrath. "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord: the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed;" Num. xvi. 46—48. Plagues are put for judgments even where this kind of disease was

not sent. The judgments God sent on Pharaoh were called *plagues*; Exod. xi. 1; xii. 13, et. al. Plagues are spoken of in the sense of judgments in the passage before us. The judgments upon the Jews, as mentioned in the former part of the Apocalypse, were called "*plagues*;" ix. 20; xi. 6. The same term is applied to the judgments upon the Romans; xvi. 9, 21; xviii. 4, 8. Those who added to the Apocalypse were to suffer these plagues in common with the others; xxii. 18. Why were plagues divided into seven forms? See xv. 6, 7, 8; xvi. 1; xvii. 1. For the same reason that the Lamb was said to have seven horns, and seven eyes; v. 6; and that the book had seven seals; v. 1; and that there were seven angels with seven trumpets; viii. 2; and that seven thunders uttered their voices; x. 3, &c., &c. The number seven signified, to the Jews at least, the idea of perfection and completeness; and nothing was more natural, therefore, as the revelator was about to describe *all* the judgments that appertain to this part of the Apocalypse, so that after them none would remain to be fulfilled, to represent them by the full and perfect number. And it is distinctly to be remembered, that these seven plagues embrace all the plagues subsequently mentioned in the Apocalypse; xvi. 9, 21; xviii. 4, 8; xxii. 18. If any other plagues besides these were found, then these would not be the last; and they are expressly said to be *the last*. ¶ *In them is filled up the wrath of God.* — And why were these plagues called *last* plagues? The answer is given in the verse before us, — "for in them is *filled up* [or finished] the wrath of God." What is meant by filled up? Prof. Stuart says, the Greek seems to run, "*having seven plagues, which are the last.*" — Vol. ii., p. 304. The measure of God's wrath is full; nothing more is to be added. When Jesus

is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory

said to the Jews, Matt. xxiii. 32, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers," he meant, Complete your wickedness, seeing ye will not repent. Go on *to the full*. In the seven last plagues was filled up, or *completed*, the wrath of God. The wrath of God is a metonymy for divine judgments; as in the preceding chapter the persecutors were threatened, that they should "drink of the wine of the wrath of God;" xiv. 10. The wrath of God having been represented by wine, xiv. 10, the seven angels who are to describe the judgments have seven vials of this wine of God's wrath put into their hands. Those vials were poured out *upon the earth*, xvi. 1, which shows that the wrath of God, mentioned xiv. 10, does *not* refer to the future world.

2. *Sea of glass*. — Almost the entire Apocalypse is scenic; especially so is this verse. We have before met with this "sea of glass" in the course of the revelator's metaphors; see iv. 6. We are inclined to the opinion that the figure was drawn from the beautiful pavement, before the tabernacle, on which the people stood to worship God. It was highly polished, composed of plates or slabs of different colors; and when the sun shone brightly, it reflected, like water, the shadows of the people. Some of the slabs were white and others red; and the rays reflected from them, mingling together, gave it the appearance of a "sea of glass mingled with fire." This view of the metaphor makes the latter part of the verse reasonable, — they "stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God;" i. e., they stand (as it were) where the people in the temple stood when they gathered together with their harps to worship God. This represented the Roman Christians as standing, after the manner

over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, hav-

of the Jews, before the tabernacle to worship God, and praise him with the harp, the well-known instrument in the religious exercises of the Jews. We say the Roman Christians, because, 1st. The Jewish Christian church had been described in the preceding chapter; and 2d. Because these were such as had "gotten the victory over the beast, [the persecuting power of Rome,] and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Observe, the revelator does not say it was actually a "sea of glass," but "*as it were* a sea of glass," i. e., in appearance like a "sea of glass mingled with fire." The pavement of the New Jerusalem was similar: "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass;" xxi. 21. For the use made of the harp by the Jews, see our remarks on xiv. 2. Many have been the sage conclusions which have been drawn from the fact of the Roman Christians standing on a "sea of glass mingled with fire." The *glass*, we have been told, represented the clearness and purity of divine truth on which they were based, and the fire denoted the purifying power thereof, &c., &c. We make no such deductions. The figure was probably drawn from the floor of the temple before the tabernacle; and by the Roman converts standing there with harps in their hands, denoted that they had been brought to worship the true God. ¶ *Victory over the beast*. — Victory is success in a contest, — the victorious party hath overcome the other. There is no doubt that the Christians had to endure many struggles, and often conflicts would take place in their own bosoms. They had much to suffer of pains, and penalties, and reproaches; but if they were faithful,

ing the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

they were promised a reward. This figure of overcoming was a favorite one with John. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; 1 John v. 4. ¶ *Over his image, over his mark, &c.*—These amplifications are mere imagery; they add nothing of importance to the sense. The meaning to be attached to the mark of the beast may be found explained under xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 9—11. See, also, xvi. 2; xix. 20; xx. 4. To get the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, was to remain faithful to Christ,—to remain victoriously a Christian,—in spite of all the power of the beast, and all the machinations of the false prophet, and all the deceptions of the image, and all the earthly advantage that was to be gained by wearing his mark, not bowing down wickedly even to the emperor himself.

3. *The song of Moses*——and *of the Lamb*.—They sung both a Jewish and a Christian song. The Jewish Christians were not represented as being converted to sing the song of Moses, for *they* had always sung that. They were converted to sing a new song, viz., the song of the Lamb; v. 9. The Christian religion is based on the Jewish; the converts from heathenism, therefore, are represented as being brought to sing the united "song of Moses and the Lamb." What was the song of Moses? It was the song of triumph which Moses and the children of Israel sung for the destruction of their enemies in the Red Sea. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the

Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him," &c., &c., Exod. xv. 1—19. This was a song of triumph for deliverance from oppression, bondage, thralldom; and it was a song like this that the Roman Christians sung, for they also had been delivered from bondage,—they had "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name;" ver. 2. The Gentile Christians, by being converted to Christianity, would learn the history of Moses; they would see that they had had a deliverance like his; they would shout a triumphant song as he did; they would also sing the song that was new to the Jews as well as to themselves, viz., the song of redeeming love; and thus they would sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb." ¶ *Great and marvellous are thy works*.—Here is the matter of the song: let us contemplate it in the words of the revelator himself. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." This was a song like that of Moses, embracing the same great principles of gratitude and confidence. God's works are great and marvellous; his ways are just and true. All men shall fear him and glorify his name. He is the Holy One. All nations shall come and worship him.

4. *Thy judgments are made manifest*.—They were made manifest to Moses

4 Who shall not fear thee,  
O Lord, and glorify thy name?

for thou only art holy: for all  
nations shall come and worship

and the children of Israel, when the Egyptian hosts were drowned. They are visible every day. They were visible to the revelator. He did not consider them as far distant, but near; they were not prospective, but present. "Thy judgments ARE MADE MANIFEST." Does this seem as if the revelator believed the judgments of God were postponed to eternity? The judgments of the Apocalypse are represented as being come, or about to come. "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged;" Rev. xi. 18. "The hour of his judgment is come;" xiv. 7. See the notes at large on vi. 10, but more especially xi. 18, and xiv. 7. Our notes on those passages will fully reveal our opinions of the Bible doctrine of judgment, formed after a very careful and we trust unbiassed study of that holy volume. In addition to what is said there, we would have it distinctly remembered, that under the Old Testament, God is represented as the Judge. He is "the judge of all the earth;" Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. vii. 11; l. 6; lxviii. 5; lxxv. 7; Eccl. iii. 17. "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth;" Ps. lviii. 11. Under the gospel reign, Jesus was appointed, as the agent of the Father, the judge of the world. As such he was *ordained of God*; Acts x. 42. "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" John v. 22. Jesus throughout the New Testament appears as the judge; Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Matt. xxv. 31—34; Rev. xix. 11. The splendid metaphors in the Apocalypse, of Jesus riding forth to put down his enemies, refer to him as the judge of the nations during the gospel reign. The word judgments, we are aware, has different significations in the word of God. It sometimes signifies God's laws, or statutes, as we should call the laws of Massachusetts the judgments or ordinances

of the state. But it is also put for the wonderful displays of the power of God in overcoming and punishing his enemies. Hence the plagues he sent upon Egypt were *judgments*. "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments;" Exod. vi. 6. The judgments with which God redeemed Israel were the remarkable manifestations of his power in wondrously preserving them against their enemies, and in opening their way to the promised land. These wonderful works they celebrated and praised as righteous, just and true. They were prominent facts in the history of the people; and, in all after ages, were celebrated as the righteous judgments of God. The rectitude of them was continually asserted. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether;" Ps. xix. 9. So in the song of Moses, in which he celebrated the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, he insists on the rectitude of the judgments. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation;" Exod. xv. 11—13. These judgments are in the Apocalypse made metaphors of the judgments of God upon Rome; and the song of Moses becomes a song for the Christians delivered from the hands of their persecutors, who sing, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glo-

before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

rify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest;" xv. 3, 4. And the judgments which are found described in the subsequent chapters of the Apocalypse are those which are here referred to, viz., the judgments which were sent upon the Roman persecutors of the church, whose punishments were so strikingly described in xiv. 9—11, 14—20. See xvi. 5—7; xvii. 1; xviii. 8—10; xix. 2; xx. 12, 13. That they were temporal judgments, and not judgments in eternity, will be made abundantly evident in the notes on those passages.

5. *Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony.*—By temple of the tabernacle was doubtless meant the temple that had stood on mount Zion. Generally, by the word temple, was intended the whole edifice, with its walls and outer courts. But what was all the rest in the sight of the Jews, compared with the inner temple, the ark, the "tabernacle of the testimony?" The ark was called the ark of testimony, because it contained the tables of the law; so the tabernacle was called the tabernacle of the testimony, because in that tent the tables of the law were kept.—(Calmet's Dic., under Testimony.) This was the ark of the covenant; Exod. xxv. 10—22; or ark of the testimony; Idem, 16. The mercy-seat was upon the ark, and the cherubim were there. "There will I meet with thee, (said God to Moses,) and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel;" Idem, 22. This, then, was most precious and sacred in the eyes of the Jews. As it was the supposed place of the divine presence, there stood the cloud that guided the people by day, and the

5 And after that I looked and behold, the temple of the

pillar of fire that guided them by night. "And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night;" Numb. ix. 15, 16. This was the manifestation of the divine presence; and by it the people knew when to tarry and when to go forward. If the cloud moved, they moved; if the cloud remained stationary, they remained in their tents. We see, then, why the temple was called "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony," viz., because that, above everything else, made the temple the place of reverence and worship.

¶ *In heaven.*—The verse we are now considering, it seems to us, has reference to xi. 19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple [what could be no longer seen on earth] *the ark of his testament.*" We refer the reader to our notes on that verse. He will see, in the 11th chapter, which concludes the second principal division of the Apocalypse, and finishes the account of the destruction of the Jews, that the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah was fully established upon the ruins of Judaism. The kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; xi. 15; and he commenced to reign in power. At that time he took upon him his great power and reigned; 17. And as the outward temple on Zion was thus destroyed, God's peculiar presence was removed from the place up to heaven; and hence it was said the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, xi. 19, or, which is the same thing, "the tabernacle of the testimony." Men should hence-

tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened :

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the

forth no longer worship God on Zion, or Gerizim ; but the true worshippers in every place should worship him in spirit and in truth. Thus, in the sight of the revelator, the temple was removed to the dwelling-place of God ; but he would vouchsafe his heavenly or spiritual presence to all humble worshippers everywhere. The Jews unquestionably looked upon heaven as a place. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place ;" Isaiah lvii. 15. This was supposed by the Jews to be the place of God's special presence. Nevertheless, they held that God could so manifest himself to men on earth, as to justify the belief that he was present with them, although not seen by outward eyes. He was present with Jacob, when on his way towards Haran : "Surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven ;" Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. This shows that the belief that God could be spiritually present with men on earth, although his dwelling-place was in heaven, existed from the earliest antiquity. Afterward God dwelt with the Jews. He accompanied them through the wilderness, in the ark. He dwelt in Zion, whither the people went to appear before God ; Psalms lxxiv. 7. The Jews supposed his presence was there in a sense in which it was manifested nowhere else on earth ; and there it continued until the temple was destroyed, when the Shekinah departed. The God, however, still remained to bless all the nations of the earth. He changed not ; it was the form of his presence only that was changed. His temple was opened in heaven ; that is, there

seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

no longer remained a temple on earth. But in every place he would dwell with the contrite. The law was succeeded by the covenant of the gospel, and this was to be regarded henceforth as "the tabernacle of God ;" xxi. 3.

6. *Came out of the temple.* — It was so customary with the Jews to draw their sacred images from the temple, that John still continued the practice, although the edifice was destroyed. Of the temple that once stood on Zion, he saw a likeness in heaven, and angels came out of it, as the priests used to come out of the building on earth. ¶ *Having the seven plagues.* — The same plagues which had been mentioned verse 1, in which was filled up the wrath of God. See xv. 1, 7, 8 ; xvi. 1 ; xvii. 1. These angels were executors of the divine will in pouring out the plagues upon the earth, as we shall see when we come to the next chapter. ¶ *Clothed in pure and white linen.* — White was the color of honor ; iii. 4, 5, 18 ; iv. 4 ; vi. 11 ; vii. 9, 13, 14. These seven angels, coming out of the temple like priests, are of course clothed in the habits of priests. ¶ *Golden girdles.* — This was the habit of the priests. They were girded over their breasts with girdles, composed in part of gold. "And the curious girdle of the ephod which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof ; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen ;" Exod. xxviii. 8. See our remarks on Rev i. 13.

7. *Four beasts.* — The translation of the word *zoa* should not be *beasts*, but living creatures. They were not beasts, but a kind of fabulous beings, remarkable for their intelligence, reverence, and constancy. The word for wild *beast* is not the word that occurs here, but *therion*, which was

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the

applied to the beast in Rev. xiii. The four beasts are mentioned first, ch. iv. 6. If the reader wishes to know what they were like, in the revelator's imagination, see iv. 7, 8; v. 8, 14; xiv. 3. We earnestly recommend to those who wish for light in regard to these hieroglyphical beasts, or creatures, to consult our long note on Rev. iv. 6. These living creatures gave to the seven angels who had issued from the spiritual tabernacle "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God." This, of course, is scenical. These angels, as we have said, were to be executors of the divine will, in pouring out the vials of wrath; of course the vials were put into their hands. The metaphor of the living creature passing out the vials of wrath from the ark, or mercy-seat, seems to have been taken from Ezk. x. 7: "And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen; who took it, and went out." The figure shows that the judgments were inflicted by the command of God. The vials were full of the wrath, or judgments, of God, meaning something that was emblematical of those things. The vials are a very similar metaphor to that of the cup; xiv. 10. ¶ *Who liveth forever and ever.* — God is the same always; he changeth not; he is without variableness or shadow of turning. Here is an instance in which we know that the phrase "forever and ever" imports strictly endless duration, because it is applied to God. The words take their force from the subject to which they are applied. But when the phrase is applied to things on the earth, and to things that long ago passed away, we know that it cannot have the same extent of signification.

wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled

8. *And the temple.* — John still has his eye on the image of the temple in heaven. See the note on verse 5. The temple on Zion, from which he had drawn so many of his metaphors, was destroyed; but still he sees the image of it in heaven; xi. 19; xv. 5; and thus draws his metaphors from it still. ¶ *Filled with smoke.* — The metaphor of "smoke from the glory of God" is very ancient. When God was represented by Moses as descending on mount Sinai, it was covered with smoke. "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him in a voice;" Exod. xix. 18, 19. This is much in the style of the Apocalypse. God's presence was represented as veiled in the smoke. The cloud and the smoke were fine metaphors, as veils of the mysterious presence of the Deity. Who that has witnessed a thunder-storm, has not felt somewhat of the awe that the description of Moses was calculated to inspire in the Jews? "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled;" Exod. xix. 16. The voice of thunder fills with awe the hardest heart. The sun is veiled, as if retiring because its Maker had come. "The thunder of his power who can understand?" Job xxvi. 14. Who is not seized with the conviction, that behind the cloud there is a mysterious Deity, whose voice we hear, and who sends his irresistible flame through the heavens? Who can wonder, then, that the ancient

with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and

Hebrews used the cloud and the smoke as veils of God's presence? Isaiah employs the same metaphor: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke;" vi. 1-4. There are many instances in which the cloud represented, in the same way, the presence of God's glory. In the journey through the wilderness the Lord went with the Israelites by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire; Exod. xiii. 21. For instances of a cloud being mentioned as the veil of the divine presence, see Exod. xvi. 10; xix. 9; xxiv. 15, 16, 18; xxxiv. 5; xl. 34, 38; Lev. xvi. 2; Numb. ix. 16; x. 34; xi. 25; 1 Kings viii. 10; 2 Chron. v. 13; Ezk. x. 4. How easily, then, we account for the description of the circumstances attending the transfiguration. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him;" Matt. xvii. 5. How natural, too, to represent Christ as coming in the clouds, to inflict judgment on his enemies; Matt. xxiv 30; Luke xxi. 27; Rev. i. 7. In reference to the ascension also, the same language is employed: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight!" Acts i. 9. "When the congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, Numb. xvi. 42, and were gathered against them, they looked towards

the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. This was the forerunner of judgment, for at once Moses directed Aaron to go quickly and make atonement, because *wrath is gone out from the Lord, and the plague is begun*; ver. 46. Thus proper is this emblem of smoke from the glory of God, or from the cloud of glory, to express the execution of judgment, as well as to be a sign of favor. Both proceed from the power of God, and in both he is glorious." — (Lowman.) ¶ *No man was able to enter into the temple.*—The services of the temple are represented as suspended. The worship of which we have so glowing a description in verses 3, 4, is discontinued. No man can enter into the temple during the pouring out of the plagues. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God;" 2 Chron. v. 13, 14. Here there was such a manifestation of the divine glory, in the cloud, that the priests were obliged to withdraw. It is possible that the revelator drew his metaphor from this prominent fact in the sacred history of the Jews, which all the people reverently remembered. His object was to show that God was present in the judgment of the seven vials, which were to be poured out upon the earth; xvi. 1. In xiv. 10, it was said that the Roman persecutors were punished "in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb." In the verse before us Jehovah him-

no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven

plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

self is represented as present in those judgments; for we hold it to be beyond dispute, that the judgments mentioned in the Apocalypse subsequently to the 14th chapter are but an amplification, or particularizing, of what is described in more general terms in that chapter. See what we have stated as to the character of that chapter in the preliminary remarks at the opening of our notes upon it. The temple was filled with smoke as a sign of Jehovah's presence when the vials were given out, and during the whole continuance of the plagues. The judgments were irrevocable; they were not to be recalled. When the plague smote the children of Israel, Moses sent Aaron in haste into the temple to make atonement, and the plague was stayed. "And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed;" Numb. xvi. 47—50. But in the case described by the revelator, no such arrest of judgment could be had. "No man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." God was present in the judgment; it was poured out with his approbation, and by his command; it could not be remitted; the whole seven of the vials must be poured out; the full measure of divine wrath or judgment must be executed upon the persecutors. The description of the temple and the smoke, of course, is scenical; for at the time of

which the revelator spake, the temple had been destroyed. It was, we repeat, merely the image of it which he saw in heaven, to which he referred; xi. 19; xv. 5. We have thus brought our notes on this chapter to a close. In the next we shall find an account of the pouring out of the seven vials; and let it be remembered that all seven of them, in which was "filled up the wrath of God," were to be poured out upon the earth.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Preliminary Remarks.*—The chapter we are now to consider is highly scenic; we can scarcely conceive of any composition that is more so. It is a metaphorical description of the woes which were about to fall on the Roman Empire, and which had been foretold by the revelator in chap. xiv. 8—11, and 14—20. It bears a resemblance somewhat to chapters viii. and ix. Under the successive openings of the seven seals, had been described the woes which were soon to fall on the Jews; and in the chapters last mentioned, those woes were more fully and particularly set forth under various metaphors. So, in the 14th chapter, the woes are denounced on the Romans, which, in the subsequent chapters, are carried out more fully under different images. The Gentile Christians remained firm in their devotion to God; they stood on "the sea of glass" and worshipped Him in view of his judgments. Preparatory to the execution of those judgments, seven angels are represented as coming out of the temple, to whom seven vials, filled with wrath, or judgments, are given; and the pouring out of the contents of these vials forms the subject of the 16th chapter, which we are now to consider.

1. *Great voice out of the temple.*—This is the same imaginary temple

## CHAPTER XVI.

AND I heard a great voice  
out of the temple, saying

which the revelator saw in heaven, and which he had mentioned in the preceding chapter. "And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened;" xv. 5. The outward temple on mount Zion had been destroyed; but accustomed as the revelator had been, in all the former parts of the Apocalypse, to draw his images from the temple, and its appendages, and the services performed there, he had conceived in his imagination the temple as being reopened in heaven. See the verse last quoted, in connection with xi. 19. He continues, therefore, to draw his images from it. ¶ *Seven angels.* — This is a second series of seven angels. The first series had seven trumpets given to them; viii. 2; the second seven received "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God;" xv. 7. Some importance is to be attached to the number seven in this case. It signifies fulness, or completeness. It was a perfect number in the view of the Jews; it filled the circle. Now, as all the woes that were to fall on the Roman persecutors were about to be described, the wrath of God was divided into seven parts, represented by the seven vials, or their contents. If there had been but four, five or six vials, we should not have got the idea of completeness; we should have expected that more judgments were to come; but the plagues were called *the seven* last plagues, because they comprehended *the whole*: "In them was filled up the wrath of God." See our note on xv. 1. ¶ *Pour out the vials.* — This is a command to the whole, not to a part. Let this fact be remembered. The figure of *pouring out*, whether we speak of blessings, or judgments, is very common among the prophets. "Pour out thine indig-

to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

nation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them;" Psal. lxix. 24. "Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations;" Ezk. vii. 8. See also Psal. lxxix. 6; Jer. x. 25; xiv. 16; Hosea v. 10. So, also, of blessings. "I will pour out my spirit" is a very common expression. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;" Isa. xlv. 3. Again: "I will open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it;" Mal. iii. 10. See also Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17, 18. We see, then, that it was a common figure of speech with the prophets to speak of anything that God sent upon men as being poured out. It was a kindred figure to represent the wrath of God as being in vials, ready to be *poured out*, when the command to that effect should be given. ¶ *Upon the earth.* — Mark this expression. These were the "seven last plagues" of the Apocalypse, and the angels were all commanded to "pour out the vials of the wrath of God *upon the earth.*" We are not to expect, therefore, to find that any of the judgments about to be described belong to the immortal state of man. By whatever metaphors these judgments are held forth, let it be remembered they were all executed *upon the earth*. The first vial was poured out upon the land; the second upon the sea; the third upon the rivers and fountains; the fourth upon the sun; the fifth upon the seat of the beast, or the place of his power; the sixth upon the great

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the

river Euphrates, and the seventh, or last, into the air. Whatever this scenery may intend, we may be confident that temporal or earthly judgments only are intended, since all the vials were to be poured out upon, or into, the earth. It is worthy of note here, that the revelator is only amplifying the judgments mentioned in xiv. 9—11, where we were told that the wrath of God is poured out into the cup of his indignation, and men are made to drink it, and are tormented in fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb. This wrath of God was to be visited on those who worshipped the beast and his image; and beyond all doubt represented the same judgments described under the metaphors of the seven vials of God's wrath, which also were poured out on "the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image;" xvi. 2. If we look closely at the 14th chapter, we shall find that the judgments described under the metaphor of drinking the wine of God's wrath, and suffering torment in fire and brimstone, ver. 10, are described in the succeeding parts of that chapter, under the metaphors of the harvest, verses 14—16, and the vintage, verses 17—20. These judgments were *on the earth*. "The harvest of the earth is ripe;" ver. 15; the angel thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped; ver. 16; the vine whose clusters were gathered was the vine of the earth; ver. 18; and the angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth; ver. 19; and the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood flowed to the horses' bridles; ver. 20. How can reflecting persons suppose that any other than temporal or earthly judgments are here described? By the seven vials of wrath are unques-

tionably meant the seven last plagues mentioned in chapter xv.

2. *Poured out his vial upon the earth.*

—The first angel poured out his vial upon the earth, i. e., upon the *land*, for the second vial is said to have been poured out upon the sea. The angels, as we have said under the preceding verse, poured out their vials as follows: 1st, on the earth; 2d, on the sea; 3d, on the rivers and fountains; 4th, on the sun; 5th, on the seat of the beast, (i. e., the place of his power;) 6th, on the Euphrates; and, 7th, into the air. The whole, remember, is mere imagery. The judgments of God upon the Jews had been described in a similar way by the revelator. See chapters viii. and ix. The angel took fire from the altar and cast it into the earth; viii. 5. This was to denote that judgments were about to begin. Under the sounding of the first angel the judgment fell on the earth; viii. 7; under the second, on the sea; ver. 8; under the third, the star Wormwood fell on the rivers and fountains of water; verses 10, 11; under the fourth, the sun was smitten; ver. 12; under the fifth, the judgment was prepared against Jerusalem, the seat of the power of the Jews; under the sixth, the operations were in the regions of the Euphrates; ix. 14; and under the seventh, in the region of the air, and there were great voices in heaven uttering, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;" xi. 15; and this agrees precisely with the effects attending the pouring out of the seventh vial; ver. 17. Thus it will be seen, there was a method in the revelator's metaphors; they were not all chaos. There was a similarity between the construction of that part which treated of the judgments that fell upon the Jews, and the part now before us,

which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel

poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

which treats of the judgments that fell upon the Romans. It is sometimes asked, what does the pouring out of the different vials upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, &c. &c., mean? We answer, it does not mean anything distinct from the great fact that the Roman Empire was to be judged. These things are only the dress which the imagination of the revelator supplied, and are to be regarded merely as parts of the imagery. He who seeks to find a distinct judgment for every vial, entirely overdoes the matter of explanation, and makes the subject darker, and not brighter. All we desire to do, in regard to these metaphors, is to show the method of them, and their origin, or the sources whence the revelator derived them, so far as we can. ¶ *There fell a noisome and grievous sore*, &c. — By sores, the sacred writers were accustomed to represent afflictions and troubles. We are inclined to think that the revelator had in his mind the judgments that God sent upon the Egyptians, because they would not let the children of Israel go up out of the land of bondage. One of the judgments that fell upon them was a breaking out of sores upon man and beast. See Exod. ix. 8—11. See, also, Psal. xxxviii. 11. The diseased moral condition of God's rebellious children was described as follows: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed up, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment;" Isa. i. 6. So Lazarus, the representative of the Gentiles, was laid at the rich man's house full of sores; Luke xvi. 20, 21. It cannot be denied, then, that in representing troubles and afflictions by

grievous sores, the revelator followed the authority of the prophets. We see here the source from whence he derived his imagery. It was not entirely the invention of his own fancy. ¶ *Mark of the beast*. — We have explained this imagery in several instances. See notes on xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 9; xv. 2. ¶ *Worshipped his image*. — On the subject of the worship of the beast, see xiii. 4, 8, 12; xiv. 9, 11.

3. *Upon the sea*. — The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea. This is the same figure, in substance, which occurs in Rev. viii. 8: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood." Such having been the metaphor by which the revelator described the judgments coming upon the Jews, he uses it again to describe the judgments coming upon the Romans. ¶ *Became as the blood of a dead man*. — We think this metaphor, as well as the former one, (ver. 2,) had its origin in the plagues of Egypt, which had been so prominent a matter in the sacred history of the Jews. By those plagues God punished the oppressor of old; and the revelator, being a Jew, drew his style and figures from the sacred history, which was so dear to the heart of every one of his pious countrymen. See Exod. iv. 9. And read the following passage: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord com-

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and

fountains of waters: and they became blood.

manded; and he lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt;" Exod. vii. 19—21. It will appear very plainly to all, that the revelator used the judgments which came of old upon the Jews, as a kind of dress, or imagery, by which to represent the judgments about to fall upon the Romans.

4. *Rivers and fountains of waters.*—This figure is like the last. We understand nothing different from what is meant in the preceding verse. It is merely a part of the scenery. That sound old writer, Dr. Hammond, says, in his note on this place, that the *earth*, or *land*, on which these vials were to be poured, "in all reason signifies the *Roman Empire*, the thing represented in these visions, as before it signified the nation and people of the *Jews*. And there is no reason to affix any nice critical notation to either of these single, that *the land*, should signify severally, and so *the sea*, and *the rivers*, but to take all together for that which was meant by the *land*, ver. 1; for so the *series* here requires, where the angels, that were commanded to *pour out their vials on the earth*, pour them out on these three, evidently noting these three to be the distribution of that one, and so all one with it. So, chap. xiv. 7, God is described as the *Creator of heaven, and earth, and sea, and fountains of water*, where all those latter three are set to denote that which is elsewhere ordinarily called the *earth*, and no more, in opposition to *heaven*. that is, this inferior. terrestrial globe, and all in it. To this may be added, that when the judg-

ments are represented to fall upon Judea, some are said to fall on the *land*, others on the *sea*, others on the *trees*, (chap. vii.,) not necessarily signifying such a separation of the judgments, some on this, some on that part, but the whole nation together, on which all those judgments fell, and this indeed agreeable to what we read of the judgments that fell on *Egypt*, where though some of them were caused by the signs that *Moses* wrought upon the land, Exod. viii. 16; others by *smiting of the waters, streams, rivers and ponds, and all their gathering together of waters*, Exod. vii. 19; and so again, viii. 5; yet it is manifest that the judgments thus produced by every one of these, (each smiting of *his rod* there being proportionable to the *pouring out of a vial here*,) fell indifferently on the whole land, and not one judgment on one part, another on another; and so sure is it to be understood in this place. Many judgments were to be poured out on the *Roman Empire*, and by all of them together the whole heathen part of it destroyed. This consideration makes it unnecessary further to inquire into the productions of the several *vials*, what each of them distinctly signified, it being sufficient that each of them notes some kind of destruction; and the number of *seven* being a perfect number, the *seven angels*, and their *seven vials*, and their *seven effusions*, signify utter destruction, and not necessarily any more, unless it be this, that it was not all at once, but by several degrees, and several sorts of judgments, those that ordinarily bring destructions upon provoking people, that have *filled up the measure of their iniquities, infectious diseases, famines and wars*; and that these, in a very remarkable manner, fell upon the *Roman Empire* about these times, appears as by all histories, ecclesiastical and profane, so especially by St

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and

Austin in his first books, *De Civitate Dei*, written on purpose to defend the Christian religion from that charge which was laid upon it, that it brought down all judgments upon the empire. Which being false, as it was urged by the heathens to the prejudice of Christianity, viz., that the judgments came for that sin of permitting Christianity in the empire, and contempt of their idol-worship; so was it most true, that for the heathens standing out and persecuting the Christian faith, most heavy wasting judgments were come upon them." So far Dr. Hammond; and how signal a proof does he furnish that the Roman Empire was judged. The heathen writers themselves acknowledged it; but the worshippers of the beast, in their great blindness, knew not that their own wickedness was the cause of these judgments, but attributed their troubles to the existence of Christianity in the empire, which had excited the wrath of their deities against them. ¶ *Water became blood.* — See what we have said on this subject under the preceding verse.

5. *Angel of the waters.* — This was one of the angels of the elements. The Jews had a tradition that to the different good angels were assigned different stations, duties and charges. The language of the Apocalypse, in frequent cases, is based on these suppositions. Hence we read of the four angels who had charge of the four winds; vii. 1. Another had "power over fire;" xiv. 18; another presided over the altar; xvi. 7; and so the angel standing in the sun was the one who presided over the orb of day; xix. 17. The imaginary being called "the angel of the waters," is introduced, in order to bring out, in a way corresponding to the style the revelator employed, the solemn truths expressed in the words he uttered.

wast, and shalt be, because thou has judged thus.

6 For they have shed the

Those who wish to look further at this matter are referred to the paragraph on the angelology of the Apocalypse, and the classification of the angels, as given in the note under v. 2. ¶ *Thou art righteous, O Lord, &c., because thou hast judged thus.* — The substance of this was sung by the Gentile Christians who stood on the sea of glass: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest;" xv. 3, 4. God, whose existence filled the present, the past, and the future, was just and righteous in the midst of his judgments. The persecutors had shed the blood of saints and prophets, and God had sent upon them sore judgments.

6. *Shed the blood of saints and prophets.* — This they were truly accused of, as the reader will see, if he peruse xi. 7; xii. 17; xiii. 7, 15. The Jews shed the blood of God's servants very freely; and the Romans did the same. The memory of Nero has been rendered infamous throughout the world, for his murder of the innocent, unoffending Christians. Having set fire, as it is said, to the city of Rome, he managed to throw the odium of that execrable action upon the Christians, and thereby excited the public indignation against them to the highest degree. He gratified his own malice, and the malice of the populace which he had himself inflamed, by putting the Christians to tortures and to death. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, and others were fastened to crosses and wrapped up in combustible garments and set fire to, that the darkness of the night might be no barrier

blood of saints and prophets,  
and thou hast given them blood

to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out

to the spectacle of their dreadful sufferings. For such scenes as these, Nero, it is said, lent his own gardens; and exhibited at the same time the public diversions of the circus, sometimes himself driving a chariot, and sometimes standing as a spectator, while the groans of burning men and women resounded in his ears. This persecution abated, and the church had a respite for a short time, when the wrath of the enemies of Christ broke forth again under the reign of Domitian. A third persecution began about A. D. 100, under Trajan; and other trials of the same kind under his successors, so that before the conversion of Constantine, the first Roman emperor who embraced Christianity, ten general persecutions of the church have been enumerated. How true was it, then, that the Romans had shed the blood of saints and prophets. ¶ *Given them blood to drink.*—This was a strong expression to show that the judgments of God fell upon them for their cruelties—a hyperbole like that in xiv. 20—“And blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” God promised to avenge the blood of his servants upon the Jews; Matt. xxiii. 34–36; so here he declares his judgments, in the same manner, upon the Romans. See vi. 10, and compare with xviii. 24, and xix. 2. All this was according to the ancient prediction, Gen. ix. 6: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” God employs men as agents of his will. He punished the Romans by the troubles which came upon them in various parts of the empire, especially by the wars and bloodshed they had to encounter, and which they would in all probability have avoided, had they lived according to the requirements of justice and benevolence. National sins require national punishments, as individual

sins require individual punishments. These judgments are sometimes dreadful, yet in all of them we are permitted to believe God has a kind and good end in view. He punishes his creatures according to their deserts. None are punished except those who are worthy of punishment. “Thou hast given them blood to drink, *for they are worthy.*” They deserved it, and they were treated according to their works. This is the principle on which the divine administration proceeds. See Ps. lxii. 12; Matt. xvi. 27; Rev. xx. 12; xxii. 12.

7. *Even so, Lord God Almighty.*—

The voice from the altar is represented as acquiescing in the judgments. This voice is introduced in order to give the revelator occasion to say what follows. ¶ *True and righteous are thy judgments.*—One of the cardinal principles of all sound theology is, that God is righteous in all his ways—as righteous in his judgments as in his mercies. He always has a good end in view. He never punishes unnecessarily, nor more severely than is consistent with his character as the Father of men. Every act is founded on the eternal principles of rectitude, for he cannot do wrong. The prophets were accustomed to speak of judgments as a bitter or disagreeable draught; and hence came the expressions, “the wine of the wrath of God;” and “the cup of his indignation.” In judgments of great severity, God was said to feed men with their own flesh, and make them drunk with their own blood. See Dent. xxxii. 42, 43; and Isa. xlix. 26. God judgeth righteously; Jer. xi. 20; 1 Peter ii. 23. From his very nature he cannot do otherwise. All his judgments, therefore, are true and righteous. The sacred writers represent God as an avenger; 1 Thess. iv. 6: he is terrible; Ps. xlvii. 2: he is a God of judgment; Isa. xxx. 18. His judgments at times are indeed awful, inscrutable,

the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and right-

eous are thy judgments.

S And the fourth angel poured

and may well be called a great deep; *Psa. xxxvi. 6.* But none of these descriptions are intended by the sacred writers to contradict the essential attributes of the Deity. God's great and leading attribute is his goodness, or rectitude. Again and again do the sacred writers declare that he is righteous; and hence no description of his judgments should lead us to attribute anything unrighteous to him; *Exod. ix. 27; 2 Chron. xii. 6; Psa. cxxix. 4; cxlv. 17; Lam. i. 18; Dan. ix. 14.* The Lord is gracious; *1 Peter ii. 3.* He is good; *Psalms xxxiv. 8; c. 5; cxxv. 3; cxlv. 9; Jer. xxxiii. 11; Nah. i. 7.* "He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;" *Psa. ciii. 8—13.* He will never cast away from his presence the mourning, penitent soul, nor shut the door of mercy against the sinful, nor prevent them, if they desire, from returning to him. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail;" *Psa. lxxxix. 30—33.* Such is the government of our God—such is his tender mercy. How beautifully and forcibly does Micah say, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger

forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old;" *vii. 18—20.* "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth;" *Prov. iii. 12.* The title which is preëminently applied to God in the New Testament is that of Father. "To give our views of God in one word, we believe in his parental character. We ascribe to him not only the name but the disposition and principles of a father—we believe that he has a father's concern for his creatures; a father's desire for their improvement; a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers; a father's joy in their progress; a father's readiness to receive the penitent; and a father's justice [*a father's justice*] for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by mercies and sufferings; by aids and temptations; by means and opportunities of various virtues; by trials of principle; by the conflicts of reason and passion; by a discipline suited to free and moral beings; for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever-growing virtue in heaven."—(*Dr. Channing's Baltimore sermon.*) God, then, is truly merciful and gracious; *Psa. cxi. 4; cxlv. 8;* full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great kindness; *Eph. ii. 4.* He is long-suffering, very pitiful, and of tender mercy; *Numb. xiv. 18; Nah. i. 3; Jas. v. 11.* He will punish the wicked, all the wicked, faithfully, adequately, but will not violate the principles of his nature, which have now been described, and which are so frequently and earnestly recognized and asserted by the writers both of the Old and New Testaments. Although in one sense his judgments

out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed

are unsearchable; Rom. xi. 33; yet, we may be sure they are founded on the eternal principles of righteousness; and we may praise God for them as being true and righteous altogether; Psal. xix. 9; cxix. 7; Rev. xix. 2.

8. *Upon the sun.*—Changes in the heavenly bodies denoted great political changes; but the intent here seems to be, that the sun's heat should be increased to that degree that men should be actually scorched with it. The heat of the sun is sometimes exceedingly oppressive, and gives rise to violent diseases, fevers, and especially inflammation upon the brain. The most sickly portions of the globe are those on which the sun has the most power; and in other portions the most sickly seasons are those which are the warmest. The heat of the sun, therefore, being increased to such an extraordinary degree as actually to scorch men, denotes the severity of the divine judgments, which came, perhaps, in the form of pestilence. The blessings of the redeemed are described in the following terms: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat;" Rev. vii. 16. That figure was evidently quoted from Isaiah xlix. 10: "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." It is a similar metaphor when the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are represented as a grateful shade beneath a scorching sky; Isa. iv. 6; xxv. 4; xxxii. 2. Although the fourth vial was poured out upon the sun, still we are to remember that no judgment is intended except that which took place

the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured

*upon the earth.* The command to the seven angels was to pour out their vials of wrath upon the earth. The effect of the fourth vial was felt nowhere but on the sun, although it was poured out upon the sun. Power was given to the sun to scorch men [i. e., men on the earth] with fire. These plagues poured from the vials are *all* represented as being on the earth; ver. 1.

9. *Blasphemed the name of God.*—In consequence of their afflictions, men blasphemed the name of God. They could not endure with patience the plagues which were sent upon them. They repented not to give God glory. The Christians glorified him, and said, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints;" but the persecutors glorified him not. ¶ *And they repented not to give him glory.*—They repented not. So it is said of the Jews, who fell under God's judgments: "The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands;" ix. 20, 21. And because they repented not, they were obliged to endure severer judgments still. They refused to glorify God. The Christians, in the midst of their deepest tribulations, glorified him. Mystery Babylon glorified herself; xviii. 7; but the Christians said, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" xv. 4. God should be glorified in all things; 1 Peter iv. 11.

10. *Upon the seat of the beast.*—The seat of the beast signifies the place of his power. A more proper translation would seem to be, the throne of the beast, not intending the very throne, the emperor's chair of state, but the place or city of his power, the

out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains

central point of the empire. Where was the seat of the beast? or the place of his power? Was it not the imperial city? ¶ *Full of darkness.*—The kingdom of the beast was full of darkness, like the darkness of Egypt that might be felt. ¶ *Gnawed their tongues.*—The anguish of the worshippers of the beast is represented as very great; they had no rest day nor night, as was foretold, xiv. 11. They gnawed their tongues for their pain. This is one of the most forcible figures to describe intense pain that the mind can conceive. In some awful diseases, the sick man gnaws his tongue. It is a horrid spectacle, and, thank God, is seen but seldom. There have been cases, in which the unhappy subject, suffering great pain, accompanied by delirium, has gnawed his tongue until it bore no resemblance to what it was once. This figure is even more forcible, we think, than that of “gnashing the teeth,” which occurs several times in the gospels, though they are parallel expressions. The language is not to be construed literally. It is clearly metaphorical. If such were the consequences attributable to the suffering of the wrath of God,—if men were made as it were mad, or delirious, by it, how properly was it represented in xiv. 10, by the wine of the wrath of God, which inflames and intoxicates men, and drives their reason away.

11. *Blasphemed the God of heaven.*—So great was the pain represented to be, that the sufferers lost all patience, and broke out in blasphemy against the Almighty; but they did not repent of their deeds. Their hearts, like Pharaoh's, were hardened. They persisted in their wickedness. See the remarks on ver. 9 How

and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the

different the condition between the worshippers of the beast, and the servants of Jesus. The former had no rest, day nor night; xiv. 11; they were maddened with pain; xvi. 10. But the latter were blessed, while their enemies were destroyed; they rested from their labors, and their works accompanied them wheresoever they went.

12. *Great river Euphrates.*—Euphrates is called “the great river” in other parts of the Scriptures; see Gen. xv. 18; Deut. i. 7; Joshua i. 4. It was the eastern boundary of the land given to the seed of Abraham; see the texts already referred to, and Deut. xi. 24; 1 Chron. v. 9. When the Israelites were conquered by the Romans, the Euphrates became the eastern boundary of the empire, and they never extended their conquests beyond this. The sixth angel is represented, therefore, as pouring out his vial on that river, that the waters thereof might be dried up, and that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared, that is, that all hindrances to the approach of the opposing armies might be taken away, and that they might march on into Syria, and hasten the fall of the Roman power. The revelator, perhaps, drew this figure from the early history of his countrymen, for God divided the Red Sea for them to pass through. The Nile, also, is represented as being divided, that the Jews returning to their country might pass through dry shod, Isa. xi. 15,—a figure like the one occurring in the verse before us. The figure of the drying up of rivers is sometimes used to represent great drought and want; in fact, we know that the smaller rivers are sometimes totally dry in a time of great drought

way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

See Job xii. 15; Isa. xix. 6; xlii. 15; xlv. 27; l. 2; Jer. li. 36; Zech. x. 11; Nahum i. 4. Another figure, as already noticed, is to represent the sea as being dried up to permit the people to pass through; Ps. lxxiv. 15; cvi. 9. ¶ *Kings of the east.*—Prof. Stuart inquires, why the kings of the east are mentioned, and adds, because “Parthia and her allies were the only powers that could pretend to rival the Romans in the strife of war. The Parthians often drove back, and at last confined, the Romans to the western bank of the Euphrates, retaining the dominion of middle Asia to themselves. The apocalyptist, therefore, here threatens war upon the Roman Empire by the only power which could then make it with any prospect of success. Even to the western parts of Asia had the Parthians sometimes urged their invasion and conquests. It is not necessary to suppose a literal prediction and fulfilment here. Enough that the symbol employed is exceedingly significant. The Roman Empire must be attacked, divided, weakened, by enemies; and this is most significantly expressed here by adverting to the only enemies which, when this book was written, were able to make any impression upon that empire.”—(Stuart on Apoc., ii., 313.) It is not to be supposed, that the Euphrates was actually dried; but it was a figurative method to show that the obstacles to the incursions of the enemies to the Romans, in that extreme quarter of the empire, should be removed; and the enemies should come in and break down the Roman power. Filled with fear at the approaching danger, the Roman power, both secular and spiritual, rouses all its energies to meet the crisis, as we shall see in the next verse.

13. *Unclean spirits.*—In this instance, unclean spirits are unquestionably spoken of metaphorically.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of

Even though we were to decide that the doctrine of actual demoniacal possessions is taught in the other parts of the New Testament, we should not suppose it was intended to be taught here. The doctrine of demoniacal possessions the Jews learned of the heathen, especially during the seventy years' captivity in Babylon; and this we judge to be the reason why we find so much more said in the New Testament concerning unclean spirits than in the Old. From this doctrine of possession, the phraseology of the Jews came to be somewhat modified; and although our Lord and his disciples adopt their phraseology, it is not to be supposed they meant to adopt their errors. The learned Dr. Lightfoot says, in his remarks on the parable of the unclean spirits: “These words seem to have been spoken by our Saviour according to the capacity of the common people, or rather according to the deceit put upon them, more than according to the reality or truth of the thing itself; taking a parable from something commonly believed and entertained, that he might express the thing which he propounded more plainly and familiarly.”—(Works, xi. 203.) From the earliest ages, the heathen supposed invisible spirits to have agency in the affairs of this world. They peopled the skies with the departed spirits of their heroes, to whom they assigned divers ranks, dispositions, and occupations; some they adored with gratitude, and others they worshipped with fear. This was all the work of imagination—it had no reality. They unquestionably believed it real; and when they experienced any extraordinary emotions, they were wont to attribute them to the agency of their *fabled* demons. This absurd notion was embraced by the Jews, as we learn from their historians; and Josephus, who lived nearly in the same age with the

the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast,

and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

apostles, tells us, that demons are the spirits of wicked men, which return to the earth, and possess and torment the living. Speaking of a certain plant, he says: "It is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons, it quickly drives away those called *demons*, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."—(Bell. Jud., lib. vii., c. vi., sec. 3.) This was the prevailing opinion in the time of Christ. Persons afflicted with insanity and epilepsy were more particularly judged to be possessed of demons; and the careful reader will perceive, by examining the supposed cases of possessions recorded in the New Testament, that the symptoms put forth by the subjects of them are precisely the symptoms shown by persons really afflicted with those diseases.—(See Jahn's Arch., sec. 194—197.) The Saviour, in speaking of persons thus afflicted, used the common language; not, as we suppose, to give countenance to the notion of the real existence of *demons*, but in tenderness, perhaps, to the persons afflicted, and in accommodation to their views of themselves, as well as to the prevailing opinion on the subject. When Jesus cured people of insanity or epilepsy, he was said to cast out a demon, or demons, if the possessed thought himself to have more than one; and when Jesus transferred the madness on one occasion to a herd of swine, as the leprosy of Naaman was transferred to Gehazi, the demons were said to enter them, and their end was what might have been expected. We have thought it proper to present these general views on the subject of demoniacal possessions. Those who wish to look more into the matter are referred to Matt. x. 1; xii. 43; Mark i. 23, 26, 27; iii.

11, 30; v. 2, 8, 13; vi. 7; vii. 25; Luke iv. 36; vii. 21, 22; xi. 24; Acts v. 16; viii. 7. We recommend the reader also to consult Farmer on Demoniacs, and Campbell's Prelim. Diss. vi., p. 1. ¶ *Mouth of the dragon, mouth of the beast, &c.*—The principal fact brought out in these two verses is, that the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet, representing Rome spiritual and Rome secular, all united to arrest the downfall of the empire. Filled with consternation at the approaching danger, the civil power roused all its energies to meet it, as did also its coadjutors, the priests and minions of Rome spiritual. We were told, in Rev. xiii. 11—13, that the second beast, the auxiliary to the first, was a lamb in appearance, but a dragon in reality. He for a time exercised all the power of the first beast, and caused the body of the people to honor and reverence the first beast, or Rome secular. This auxiliary beast was to do great wonders, and to deceive mankind by the miracles which he appeared to perform; verses 14, 15. The unclean spirits, like frogs, came out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, the same power being intended here by the false prophet which is intended in Rev. xiii. 11—13 by the auxiliary beast. The heathen spiritual power, beyond all doubt, was auxiliary to the secular. But the energies of all were summoned to ward off the dangers of the empire. Every kind of art and deception were employed to control the people, and ensure their devotion to the ruling power. The revelator states that the unclean spirits wrought miracles, the object of which was to rouse the people "to the battle." The unclean spirits that came out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet, were like *frogs*. The frog is an odious animal, and was unclean under the law. It inhabits

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the

low marshes and bogs, and the filthiest and most stagnant pools. The frogs were known as one of the plagues of Egypt, and even the magicians of that country had power to counterfeit the miracle wrought by Moses; *Exod. viii. 2, 7; Psal. lxxviii. 45; cv. 30.* Hence the unclean spirits that came out of the mouth of the dragon were compared to them.

14. *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles.*—The unclean spirits were not, of course, real beings. The whole is metaphorical. The dragon and beast are both metaphors; and the unclean spirits like frogs coming out of their mouths are metaphors. So when we are told they are the spirits of demons, or devils, the language is still metaphorical, the spirits of imaginary beings being put for the deceivers who endeavored, by their auguries and enchantments, to stir up the people against the Christian religion. Every reader of history knows, that the order of augurers was held in very high repute among the Romans. See the remarks on *xiii. 14*, and *xix. 19, 20*. Few important matters of state were done without their advice. They were supposed to have power to foretell future events, and to decide whether any enterprise about to be undertaken would be successful. They were an order of priests, and had a college, or corporation, at Rome. They served to keep the people in subjection. Every one must see, that such an order of priests would have a vast influence upon the populace. They stirred them up to war, or kept them back from it, almost at their pleasure. They had great influence over the rulers, called in the verse before us, “the kings of the earth and of the whole world,” who by their influence,

battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest

by their auguries, by their assurances of success, were gathered together “to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” ¶ *That great day.*—By that “great day” is meant the day of God’s visitation upon the empire for its sins. The day of God is a phrase frequently employed by the sacred writers to describe any time in which God specially visited men with judgments. Thus, the time of the destruction of Babylon is called the day of the Lord; *Zeph. i. 12—18*; so also was the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. See the language of Joel: “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness;” *ii. 1, 2*. The New Testament writers adopt the same language; see *Luke xxi. 34*; *1 Thess. v. 4*. And as it is said to be the day of God Almighty, it would seem to show, that although all the forces of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, might combine, yet they could not prevail against the Most High.

15. *Behold, I come as a thief.*—Here is one of the strongest illustrations we could possibly have, that metaphors and comparisons are not designed, as authors say, to go upon all fours,—that is, they are not supposed to hold good in all particulars. When once we have got the design of a writer, that is enough; we are not to persist in applying his imagery in a variety of ways that he never thought of. The Judge says: “Behold, I come as a thief.” Here, the point to be illustrated was, that he came suddenly and unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. This is the whole

he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel

design and end of the comparison, and it should not be pursued any further. The thief comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy; but we must not push the comparison to this length, for Jesus came for no such purpose. We see, then, that by pushing the application of metaphors and comparisons too far, we do essential injustice to the meaning of the sacred writers. Obtain, if possible, the true meaning, and there stop. See the remarks on iii. 3. The passage before us is evidently parenthetical; for the strain of the 14th verse is resumed in the 16th. Paul exhorted his brethren, at Thessalonica, not to let "the day of the Lord" overtake them as a thief; 1 Thess. v. 4; and this seems to be the design of the verse before us. The Christians were required to watch for that day, and keep their garments in order, that they might not be obliged to walk in their shame.

16. *Gathered them together.*—Here the account of the battle mentioned in verse 14 is resumed again. And he gathered them together; i. e., the power did this which was mentioned in the verse last named, which went forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day, &c. ¶ *In the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*—And the place to which they were gathered together was called in Hebrew, Armageddon. There are different speculations as to what is meant by Armageddon. We incline to the opinion that it is formed from the Hebrew word signifying a mountain, and Megiddo, the name of a place mentioned in the Old Testament; so that Armageddon signifies the Mountain of Megiddo. It was a place famous in the history of the Old Testament for blood

poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices,

and slaughter; see Judges v. 19; 2 Kings ix. 27; xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22; Zech. xii. 11. Armageddon is therefore put for a place of slaughter, because it had been noted for battles. The name Waterloo, in consequence of the great reverse suffered there by the Emperor Napoleon, is now used to signify any place of overthrow and defeat; and so Armageddon is put for any place of great slaughter. Bonaparte once gained a great victory at Austerlitz. At another battle, in which he determined to succeed, and which he commenced just as the sun was rising, he pointed to the luminary and said, "It is the sun of Austerlitz." It was on this principle that the armies were said to be gathered together at Armageddon.

17. *Seventh angel.*—The seventh angel was the last of the series. The description of the judgment is now about to be finished. ¶ *Into the air*—In the imagery of the chapter the seventh vial of the wrath of God is said to have been poured into the air. ¶ *A great voice.*—And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, the very place of the Holy One, saying, "It is done." That is, the last vial is poured out, and under this vial the judgment is completed. The facts to be stated in the succeeding verses of the account are the completion of the judgment. On the subject of "the great voice," see the note on xiv. 18.

18. *Thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake.*—The terms used here are repeatedly employed in the Scriptures, and especially in the Apocalypse, to represent great commotions among men, and the overthrow of nations. An earthquake is usually attended by a great noise, like the

and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was

rolling of thunder, which, in the language of Scripture, is the voice of God. And as nothing more quickly or more utterly destroys a place than an earthquake, so that convulsion of nature is made to represent, in the sacred writings, the overthrow of states and empires. The destruction of Jerusalem is described in the same terms; Rev. vi. 12; viii. 5; xi. 13, 19. The last quoted verse bears a very strong resemblance to the verse now before us. It was the destruction of Rome and the other cities of the empire that was intended under the metaphor, as is evident from the next verse.

19. *Into three parts.*—The great city was undoubtedly Rome, which, by the divine judgments became divided and broken, like a place broken into chasms by an earthquake. The expression “three parts” is used here, as in other places in the Apocalypse, not in a strictly numerical sense. Other cities of the empire were probably involved in the judgments. ¶ *Great Babylon*—i. e., Babylon spiritually, meaning Rome, (as Jerusalem was called Sodom, for its wickedness, xi. 8,) came up in remembrance before God; i. e., he did not forget her sins; he did not fail “to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath;” he did not forget to pour out her wickedness upon her. In this sense she came in remembrance before him. These seven vials were the wrath of God. They were “the seven last plagues.” The vials were poured out “upon the earth,” verse 1. The cup of the wine of the fierceness of God’s wrath, then, was the same as the vials of God’s wrath, and of course referred to the judgments that fell

divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled

upon the Roman Empire on the earth. Hence, when we are told, “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever,” (Rev. xiv. 10, 11,) we are made certain that the metaphors refer to the judgment which God sent upon the Romans here *on the earth*, and not in the immortal state. Compare the last quoted text with Rev. xvi. 1, 19.

20. *Every island, &c.*—These metaphors are introduced merely to heighten the description. Islands and mountains are sometimes removed by earthquakes; there is a correspondence, therefore, in the figures. This figure is identical with that employed to represent the judgment that befel the Jews; see vi. 14. To describe the power of God, Isaiah had said, “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing;” xl. 15. Ezekiel described with similar figures the fall of Tyre: “Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus: Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation

away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,

for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of sea-faring men, the renowned city, which was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now, shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure;" xxvi. 15—18. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the revelator should describe the fall of Rome by the metaphors that occur in this verse? Commotions in the mountains are very frequently used to represent the judgments of God upon his enemies, or upon his rebellious children. David calls on God to send judgments on his enemies, in the following manner: "Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke;" Psa. cxliv. 5. The mountains melted at his presence; Isa. xxxiv. 3. They flowed down; Idem, lxiv. 1—3. He made them waste; Idem, xlii. 15. We can no longer wonder that the revelator, who had been educated in the school of the prophets, should describe the effects of the divine judgments on Rome, by the islands fleeing away, and the mountains being moved out of their places.

21. *A great hail.*—And as to the hail, that also is parallel, like the judgments mentioned in the preceding verse, to the metaphor in xi. 19, which forms a part of the description of the judgments of the Jews. The storm of hail is represented as terribly severe, each stone about the weight of a talent, many pounds. A horrid judgment! ¶ *The plague thereof was exceeding great.*—This last sentence explains the whole design. Whatever metaphors are employed, the only object was to represent the plagues to be "exceeding great." We submit our notes on this chapter with the following concluding observations.

24\*

These several vials, as we have shown, do not signify so many special judgments. They are not to be taken severally, but as a whole. The number seven signifies completeness, perfection, as if all the judgments of the Apocalypse that remained to be described were fulfilled by the vials. In them was "*filled up the wrath of God*;" xv. 1. But there is a propriety observed through the whole. The first vial was poured on the land, and a grievous sore fell on the people; the second on the sea, and it became blood; the third on the rivers and fountains, and the waters were changed in the same manner; the fourth on the sun, and his power was greatly increased; the fifth on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was filled with darkness; the sixth on the Euphrates, and it was dried up, that the enemy might pass; the seventh on the air, and that was agitated by thunders and lightnings, and the great hail and an earthquake. There is a plan in the whole; the scenery is not chaotic. The consequences of pouring out each vial are proper to the place or element on which it was poured out. The pouring out of the seven vials answers to the opening of the seven seals, mentioned from chap. vi. 1, to viii. 1. Under the seven seals were described the catastrophes that came upon the Jews; under the seven vials those that came on the Romans. There is somewhat of a uniformity in the plan pursued in both cases. The Jews were represented as being about to be visited by war, prefigured by the rider on the red horse, (vi. 4;) famine, by the rider on the black horse, with the pair of balances, (vi. 5;) and pestilence, by death on the pale horse, (vi. 8.) The same fate awaited the Romans. The plagues poured out from the seven vials are all resolvable into these three great evils of nations.

every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the

plague of the hai; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

1st. The *pestilence* is described under the grievous sore, (xvi. 2,) which is represented to have been rendered more fatal, by the people being cut off from all power to cleanse themselves, the rivers and fountains being turned to blood, (verses 3, 4,) which they were also obliged to drink, (verse 6.) Was not this a forcible description of a *pestilence*? 2d. The *famine* is described under the excessive drought and scorching. The idea of a *famine* must be involved; for how could the fruits of the earth be produced, if the heat of the sun were increased to that degree, that "power was given to him to scorch men with fire?" (verse 8.) 3d. *War* was also evidently intended, for the sixth vial was poured out on the river Euphrates, which was dried up, "that the way of the kings of the East [i. e., the kings reigning east of that river] might be prepared;" verse 12; and what is said of gathering the forces together to battle at Armageddon is further confirmation of the fact. Thus, although we place no dependence on the consecutive order of the vials, and do not suppose they were designed to impress the Christians with the expectation of a regular series of seven judgments, still we do see that the idea of pestilence, famine and war is involved. As in chapters vii., viii., ix., x. and xi., we found a continued description of the events prefigured under the seven seals, so in chapters xvii., xviii., xix., &c., we shall find a continued description of the events prefigured under the pouring out of the seven vials.

The similarity of the imagery which was used under the seven trumpets, chapters viii., ix., x., xi., with that which occurs under the seven vials, chapter xvi., will best be seen by the following table:

TRUMPETS.	VIALS.
Under the trumpets, judgments fell:	Under the vials, judgments fell:
1. On the earth, or land, viii. 7.	1. Upon the earth, or land, xvi. 2.
2. On the sea, and it is changed to blood, 8.	2. On the sea, and it is changed to blood, 3.
3. On the rivers and fountains, 10.	3. On the rivers and fountains, 4.
4. On the sun, 12.	4. On the sun, 8.
5. The armies came forth against Jerusalem, the seat of the Jewish persecuting power, ix. 1—12.	5. On the seat of the beast, or place of his power, 10.
6. Operations in the region of the Euphrates, 14.	6. Upon the great river Euphrates, 12.
7. In the region of the air: and there were great voices in heaven, saying. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and the continued opposition was denoted by lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquakes, and great hail, 15—19.	7. Into the air; and there were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and a great earthquake, and hail immensely great, every hail stone about the weight of a talent, 17—21.

There is evidently a plan in the Apocalypse; the book is not chaotic. Better is it to study it, in connection with the prophets, to see what is its true import, than to neglect it altogether, and scoff at it as unworthy of notice.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Preliminary Remarks.* — Let us see, at the commencement of this chapter, how far we have brought down the prophecy of the punishment of the Roman persecutors of Christianity. In the 12th chapter, we saw that the ecclesiastical power of Rome was set forth under the figure of the dragon; and, in the 13th, the civil power of the same empire was set forth under the figure of a beast. Both the dragon and beast had seven heads and ten

## CHAPTER XVII.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with

horns, showing that the same empire was represented by both; but there were such marks of dissimilarity, and such different actions attributed to each, that it is evident the power of the empire was described under two different aspects. Both the religious and civil power of Rome persecuted the Christians. In the 14th chapter (which we said was, as it were, a table of contents to what remained to be treated of in the Apocalypse) we found, 1st. A representation of the perseverance and fidelity of the Jewish church notwithstanding the persecutions; 1—5. 2d. The opening of the gospel to the Gentiles; verses 6, 7. 3d. The impending judgment of the Romans announced, who were to have no rest day nor night; verses 8—11 and 14—20; and 4th. During these troubles the Christians were blessed, by resting from their persecutions, while their works of great success in the gospel followed them wherever they went; verses 12, 13. So much for the 14th chapter. In the 15th we find just what we should expect, viz., the success of the gospel among the Gentiles; for the church of the Gentiles is seen standing on the sea of glass, praising God and the Lamb, while the commission is issued to the angels to pour out their woes upon the wicked, idolatrous, persecuting empire. The seven angels are furnished with "seven golden vials [or bowls] full of the wrath of God;" and the 16th chapter is occupied with a description, highly metaphorical, and thus in keeping with the general style of the Apocalypse, of the pouring out of the vials on the earth. And thus we are brought to the 17th chapter.

1. *One of the seven angels.*—The 17th chapter is explanatory of the judgments which had been intended

me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters;

by the pouring out of the seven vials. Let the fact be distinctly remembered. The revelator says, that one of the seven angels, *who had the seven vials*, came to him, and talked with him, i. e., to give him further information concerning what was intended by the pouring out of the vials. It was not some other angel, but one of the seven-vial angels; which seems to show that the same subject is to be continued—that what is to be described is a part of the judgment denoted by the vials. We are now to see whose judgment it was that had been described in xvi. 19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." ¶ *I will show unto thee.*—

That is, "I will point out to thee more fully the judgment of great Babylon, of which I have already spoken."

¶ *The judgment of the great whore.*—The metaphor of a woman "sitting on many waters," seems to be a kind of mixed metaphor; but it will all appear plainly as we proceed. By the vile woman was intended the city spiritually called "Babylon;" xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xvii. 5; xix. 2; and to speak of a city as being set on many waters is a very just description. The revelator learned his figure of the lewd woman from the prophets. Nahum thus describes the wickedness of Nineveh: "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts;" iii. 4. See the whole passage from verse 1—7; and for more concerning this figure of speech, see under verse 3, below. The judgment

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

of the vile woman was a present judgment—a judgment about to break out when the revelator wrote his prophecy. The seven angels were directed to pour out their vials *on the earth*; xvi. 1; and these seven vials contained the seven *last* plagues, in which were *filled up* the wrath of God; xv. 1. We must not look away from the earth in order to find this judgment. The judgments of God on the enemies of his church were *made manifest* to the early Christians; xv. 4. “Thy wrath *is come*, and the time of the dead that they should be judged;” xi. 18. “The hour of his judgment *is come*;” xiv. 7. “In one hour *is thy judgment come*;” xviii. 10. See particularly the notes on xi. 18; xiv. 7; xv. 4; and xvi. 5—7. We see, then, very clearly, that no judgment is referred to here, except that which took place in this world. Whether the doctrine of a judgment in the future state is true, is no part of our purpose to discuss; we say merely that that doctrine gets no support from the passages before us. ¶ *That sitteth upon many waters.*—The waters on which the woman sat represented “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,” as we shall show more fully under verse 15, where the metaphor of “the many waters” is explained. Examine that verse.

2 *Committed fornication.*—The species of crime here mentioned is not to be understood strictly; it is a figure to denote that the kings of the earth had combined with her to do great wickedness. They had carried on illicit trade with her, and thereby corrupted and debased the people. See xviii. 3. It was very common for the prophets, and even the New Testament writers, to represent other sins and improprieties under the figure of offences against conjugal life. See

Isa. xxiii. 17; Ezk. xvi. 30. Also the following passage: “Wherefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers?—and commit ye whoredom after their abominations? For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you;” Ezk. xx. 30, 31. See the notes on ii. 14, 20; xiv. 4. We are not to understand anything more, therefore, from the revelator’s words, than that the kings of the earth consorted with spiritual Babylon, or Rome, to do wickedly; and this was done principally through the influence of Rome. ¶ *Drunk with the wine of her fornication.*—She had power to entice the nations, to inflame their passions, to madden them; and hence it is said, “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” Here is a double metaphor. The crime mentioned is itself a figure, and the “wine of fornication” is metaphor upon metaphor. In verse 4, the woman is said to have a golden cup in her hand, in which she carried her intoxicating wine. The revelator describes the wrath of God by precisely the same metaphor—“the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation;” xiv. 10. See the remarks under that passage. This figure will be still further explained under verse 4, which see below.

3. *In the spirit.*—The revelator says, he carried me away *in the spirit*; i. e., as if he had said, “I did not go bodily, but in my imagination merely.” The scene was so vivid, that although he was not there in reality,

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon

a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

yet it seemed to him that he was so. He was there spiritually, i. e., mentally. ¶ *Woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast.*—The scene which laid before him was this: he appeared to be in the wilderness, and he saw a woman, sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of blasphemous names, (i. e., the beast was full of these names,) having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was the harlot mentioned in the two preceding verses; and of course this vision must have been something like what John expected to see, from the invitation which had been given him by the angel, "Come hither, I will show unto thee," &c. It was very common for the prophets to represent a city under the figure of a woman. What was the "daughter of Zion," but the temple or city of Jerusalem? What was the "daughter of Babylon," but the city of Babylon? "They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail;" Jer. l. 42, 43. Instances in which this figure occurs in the prophets are too numerous to be even referred to. It was no uncommon thing, then, among the Jews, to personify a city, and describe it as a woman—a virgin, if it was pure—a harlot, if it was, like Rome, wicked. Those who were well versed in the Jewish prophets would readily have understood these things, on the earliest appearance of the Apocalypse. The woman mentioned in the verse before us sa. "upon a scarlet-colored beast." This was the beast mentioned in chap. xiii. 1. He had seven heads

and ten horns, as mentioned in that place, and was "full of the names of blasphemy;" and so we read that the beast (xiii. 1) had "upon his heads the name of blasphemy." There is no doubt, then, that the beast, on which the woman sat, represented the secular power of the empire; and the city of Rome did sit on that beast. Being the imperial city, the centre of the power, both secular and ecclesiastical, the empire sustained the city, and contributed immensely to its support and grandeur. The woman, therefore, is represented as resting or sitting on the beast. Scarlet and purple were colors of great magnificence among the Romans; they were the colors of state, the mark or sign of imperial power. Hence the beast is scarlet-colored. ¶ *Full of the names of blasphemy.*—This may mean, full of names, or titles, or sentences, that are in fact blasphemous, and may refer to the distinctions which the emperors saw fit to take upon themselves. The seven heads and ten horns have been already explained, under chapters xii. and xiii., and will be explained again below, under vs. 9—12. There is a conjecture of Lowman, which we think not altogether unworthy of credit. He says: "The beast seems to be called scarlet-colored, because a scarlet covering, or rich cloth, was thrown over it. Might not that rich horse-cloth be embroidered with gold, and have heads and horns worked upon it, as emblems of power and authority, with proud mottoes, or titles, amounting to blasphemy?" There seems to be something reasonable in this conjecture (See Paraphrase, &c., page 207.) Having noticed John's description of the beast, we turn now to that of the woman.

4. *The woman was arrayed, &c.*—Contrast the appearance of this

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a

golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication :

5 And upon her forehead was

woman with that of the woman mentioned in chapter xii. 1, and mark the difference. The former is distinguished by rich and gaudy decorations; the latter is clothed with the sun, the source of light: the one is decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, and has a golden cup in her hand, which is full of abominations and filthiness; while the other is lifted above all earthly glory and magnificence, and has the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown or circle of twelve stars: the former represents the city of Rome, distinguished by great magnificence, but very corrupt; the latter represents the holy city, New Jerusalem, which came down from God out of heaven, and looked as a bride prepared for her husband. The woman [Rome] was, as we have said, "arrayed in purple and scarlet." These were the colors of the imperial habit, — the purple in times of peace, and the scarlet in times of war. The object of the revelator is to set her off with all possible magnificence of dress. But he borrows his figures from the prophets. See the following: "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes, was prepared thee in the day that thou wast created;" Ezk. xxviii. 12, 13. ¶ *A golden cup in her hand.* — This also is a prophetic metaphor, as will be seen by the following passage: "Babylon hath been a golden

cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad;" Jer. li. 7. The cup agrees exactly with the description of the woman. It is a golden cup, and she is dressed with great magnificence. ¶ *Full of abominations, &c.* — But notwithstanding it is a golden cup, it is full of abominations and filthiness; and so, although she was decorated with such a profusion of rich ornaments, yet she was full of wickedness and impurity. The influence of Rome upon the nations at large was decidedly bad; and hence the woman is said to give the contents of the cup to the nations to drink, and they were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Wine is used in the Apocalypse as a metaphor in two senses, viz., 1st. To represent the wrath of God; xiv. 10; xvi. 19; and 2d. To represent the wickedness of men; xiv. 8; xvii. 2; xviii. 3. The reason is easily seen. They both madden men, like very strong wine excessively used. The judgments which God sends on men sometimes madden them, and make them act as though their reason was destroyed. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds;" xvi. 10, 11. Judgments producing such effects might well be represented by inflammatory wine. So the maddening influence of evil examples, especially those of a bad woman, are well described by the wine of fornication. Men's reason is driven away, and they seem to know not, nor care, what they do. The influence of the woman

## a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT

Rome, therefore, was represented by a golden cup, corresponding to her outward magnificence, which is full of the means of temptation and destruction.

5. *Upon her forehead.*—The forehead is mentioned as the most conspicuous part of the body on which to place the label. So Aaron bore the motto, "Holiness to the Lord," engraved on a golden plate, upon his forehead. "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the fore-front of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord;" Exod xxviii. 36—38. Subsequently it became a custom to place a mark of approbation on the foreheads of those who were worthy of particular honors. "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof;" Ezk. ix. 4. Thus the hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed in the forehead; Rev. vii. 3; which mark the enemies of the gospel had not; ix. 4. The redeemed are said to have the Father's name written in their foreheads; xiv. 1. The forehead being the place on which marks, or inscriptions of honor, were worn, earthly potentates conferred honors to be thus worn; and hence they ordained sentences and titles for that purpose. The beast caused all that worshipped him to receive his name in their foreheads; xiii. 16; xiv. 9. It is said by some writers, that lewd and public women

were accustomed, among the Greeks and Romans, to wear their name and their character upon their foreheads, and perhaps this was done among some of the earlier nations; and hence the prophet speaks of a person without shame as having a harlot's forehead. "And thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed;" Jer iii. 3. It is easy enough to be seen, then, why, in the case before us, the woman is said to have her title written upon her forehead. ¶ *Mystery, Babylon the great, &c.*—We can easily see why the woman should wish to place upon her forehead the title, "BABYLON, THE GREAT;" but why she should wish to call herself "*mystery*," or to declare that she was "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," is more difficult to be known. For although she may be supposed to have had no shame, yet she would hardly have desired to wear an inscription that would destroy all her influence, and warn the unwary in the most direct manner against her. We think the conjecture of Prof. Stuart on this verse a very reasonable one. He puts it as follows: "And upon her forehead was a name *mysteriously* written, BABYLON, THE GREAT; (the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth;)" as if the language quoted in parenthesis was that of the revelator, and formed no part of the title. And now a few words as to Babylon. The ancient city Babylon was situated on the Euphrates, but its history is veiled in much mystery. It is doubtful where the exact site was. The accounts of it approach almost to the miraculous. The walls are said to have been about three hundred and fifty feet high, and eighty-seven feet thick; to have had two hundred and fifty towers, and one hundred gates of brass, and to have been more than sixty miles in circuit. The temple of Belus and the hanging gardens were among the greatest

## THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

curiosities of this gigantic place, of which almost every trace is destroyed. It is certain that Babylon proper was not intended by the motto on the woman's forehead. Hence, she is said to be Babylon, not really, but by way of mystery, enigma, or figure; as if it were said, "Upon her forehead was a name written metaphorically, Babylon, the great." When the Son of man declared to the revelator the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks, he said, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches;" this was giving the mysterious or metaphorical sense of the figures employed. So when the revelator says, in the chapter before us, "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast," &c., (ver. 7,) he goes on to show what was meant by those metaphors. "Mystery, Babylon," therefore, means, not Babylon proper, but Babylon in a mysterious, or metaphorical sense. And why was the figure Babylon used? The term seems to have been one which the woman was willing to apply to herself. Babylon was truly a great city, and one of the wonders of the world. Rome claimed to be in glory and magnificence what Babylon was, when at the height of her pride. The sacred writers compare Rome to Babylon for other reasons, viz., to foreshadow her destruction. Babylon had been the place to which the Jews had been carried captive, (see *Psa. cxxxvii.*) and for the bondage and indignities which they suffered there, they believed that God would overthrow the city and kingdom, which was so effectually done that doubts now remain as to the exact site of the former. Nebuchadnezzar carried away the holy vessels from Jerusalem and put them in his temple at Babylon; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. For the

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the

wickedness of the city God decreed, that "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah;" Isa. xiii. 19. Hence comes the proverb, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen;" Isa. xxi. 9, and Jer. li. 8. Reason enough, therefore, why Babylon was used metaphorically for Rome, just as Sodom and Egypt were used for Jerusalem: "The great city, which spiritually (or by mystery) is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified;" xi. 8. Rome was doomed to fall, and to become "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird;" xviii. 2. Rome was, in truth, the mother of harlots, whether she would see fit to wear such an acknowledgment or not. It was a habit with the prophets to call any wicked city a harlot. As for instance, 1st. Jerusalem. "How is the faithful city become a harlot!" Isa. i. 21. Also Jer. iii. 20, and Ezk. xvi. 15, — in fact the whole of the last named chapter. 2d. Tyre; see Isa. xxiii. 15—18. Scarcely anything was more common than for the prophets to represent wicked cities under this similitude. The language and style of the revelator, in this respect, would not, therefore, have appeared strange to the people whom he addressed. The "mother of harlots" shows how wide was the influence of Rome, as if she was the head of a family of cities of that description.

6. *Drunken with the blood of the saints.* — The woman was intoxicated with the blood of saints; i. e., she had revelled in their blood, until she had become perfectly mad or delirious. To make one drunk with blood, is to revel in slaughter. "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh;" Deut

martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

xxxii. 42. Again we find a similar metaphor: "For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates;" Jer. xlvi. 10. Once more: "And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you;" Ezk. xxxix. 19. The figure of the revelator, it will be seen, was a very common one in his day. His meaning was, that the woman Rome had rioted in the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and she scarcely knew what she was doing, like a person drunken or delirious. ¶ *I wondered with great admiration.*—When the revelator saw the woman, "he wondered with great admiration," i. e., with great wonder, not with pleasure, or approbation. The sense of the word admiration has somewhat changed. It formerly signified wonder, without approval; but its common signification now is, gratifying wonder. In the passage, it means great marvel; and hence the angel says, in the next verse, "Wherefore didst thou marvel?"

7. *Wherefore didst thou marvel?*—The revelator marvelled at the woman, and the beast on which she sat; as if he would have said, What can these things mean? To this the angel replies: "I will tell thee the mystery." What mystery? Ans. That "of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." I will tell thee what these metaphors mean; I will let thee into the hidden sense. ¶ *Mystery.*—Unfortunately, the word mystery has been greatly misunderstood. It has been thought to mean, something absolutely incomprehensi-

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery

ble and unintelligible. But this, as Parkhurst says, is a very unscriptural and dangerous sense. "I think proper to observe, (says that author,) that I have carefully taken notice of all the passages in the New Testament in which the term mystery occurs; and this I have the rather done, because a most unscriptural and dangerous sense is but too often put upon this word, as if it meant somewhat absolutely unintelligible and incomprehensible. A strange mistake! since in almost every text wherein it is used, it is mentioned as something that is revealed, declared, shown, spoken, or which may be known or understood."—(See his Lexicon, under *Mysterion*.) Dr. Campbell maintains that this word is used in two senses only in the New Testament, neither of which has any relation to the idea of incomprehensibility. One sense is that of *arcanum*, a secret. But he adds: "The word is sometimes employed to denote the figurative sense, as distinguished from the literal, which is conveyed under any parable, allegory, symbolical action, representation, dream, or vision. It is plain that in this case the term *mysterion* is used comparatively; for, however clear the meaning intended to be conveyed in the apologue, or parable, may be to the intelligent, it is obscure, compared with the literal sense, which, to the unintelligent proves a kind of veil. The one is, as it were, open to the senses; the other requires penetration and reflection. Perhaps there was some allusion to this import of the term when our Lord said to his disciples, 'To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven; but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables;' (Mark iv. 11.) The apostles were let into the secret, and got the spiritual sense of the similitude, whilst the

of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest,

multitude amused themselves with the letter, and searched no further. In this sense *mysterion* is used in these words: 'The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches;' Rev. i. 20. Again, in the same book, 'I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her,' &c. Thus far Dr. Campbell; and the testimony of these two authors we shall regard as sufficient to settle the question as to the New Testament sense of the word before us. — (Prelim. Dis. ix., pt. i., sec. 7.)

8. *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not.* — Here the angel begins to tell the mystery of the woman and the beast that carrieth her, agreeably to the promise made by him, which was given in the preceding verse. The beast is first described, notwithstanding the woman is mentioned first in the order of the chapter. The description of the beast occupies from verse 8 to verse 17, inclusive. The description of the woman is exceedingly brief, and occupies only the 18th verse. Let us first examine carefully what is said about the beast. "The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." Here are three kinds of time mentioned, viz., the past, the present, and the future. He was, he is not, and shall be. What does this mean? It has the appearance of an enigma. What should we infer from the words except that the power intended by the beast once was, then ceased to be, and afterwards revived again? Prof. Stuart solves the enigma by referring to a belief which existed in regard to Nero, the great

was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall

persecutor of the church, that he should be assassinated, should disappear for a time, and then should revive again and reign. His words are: "The beast means the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, of whom the report spread throughout the empire is, that he will revive, after being apparently slain, and will come as it were from the abyss, or *Hades*; but he will still perish, and that speedily." If such a belief did exist in the empire in regard to Nero, it would be sufficient ground for the revelator's description, although he himself had no faith in what the multitude believed. His reference to this common belief or superstition would show just as conclusively who he meant, as though the belief were ever so well founded. In the description of the beast in xiii. 3, we read: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed." This may also be a reference to the common belief concerning Nero. We spoke not positively of the sense of that verse, when we considered it in its place. In xiii. 14, the revelator is particular to mention that the beast had his wound by a sword, which would make it possible that the assassination of Nero was referred to. The beast, it was said, "should ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." This scourge came up from beneath. He did not come down from above, as a blessing from heaven; but sprang up from beneath, as a scourge to the world. See, also, xi. 7. But he will not remain long; he is to be lost; he will utterly pass away and be heard of no more; he will go into perdition. See remarks under ver. 11 of this chapter. ¶ *And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder.* — That is, all except the Christians, all except those

wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind

whose names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, should wonder when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the enigma again. But does not this repetition help us to solve it with still more confidence? The worshippers of the beast would wonder, but the Christians would not wonder. The worshippers of the beast, believing that Nero was destined to be assassinated, and to revive from the dead, would wonder to behold him. Reference seems to be made to this in xiii. 3: "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast;" i. e., all the heathen world. If the revelator referred to the popular superstition in regard to Nero, he did not mean that the head was *actually* wounded to death, but merely as if it were so, — a supposition. And when they believed that the deadly wound was to be healed, that is, that the emperor should die and come to life again, they all wondered after him; and he would naturally have been a subject of wonder under such circumstances. But the Christians, whose names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, wondered not, because they had no belief in the popular superstition. Let us pass on.

9. *Here is the mind which hath wisdom.* — Referring to what had preceded. Here, in what has been said, is a mind, or manifestation of a mind, that has wisdom. It will require wisdom to understand it. A similar expression occurs xiii. 18. And certainly this is the most difficult part of the chapter to comprehend; and

which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet

requires the most wisdom. ¶ *The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.* — Rome was the seven-hilled city; and for this she was famous all the world over. There cannot remain a doubt that Rome, therefore, was intended by the woman who sat on the scarlet-colored beast. Lowman says: "The interpretation of the angel leaves no room to doubt, that the persecuting power here prophesied of was to be some empire of which the city of Rome was to be the capital, or seat. Rome was as well known by its situation on seven hills, or mountains, as by the name of Rome itself. *Urbs septicollis* was never mistaken for any other city, Roman authors have so fully determined the sense of it."

10. *There are seven kings.* — The seven heads of the beast, it is seen, may have a twofold application, for they may signify not only the seven mountains on which the city was built, but also a succession of seven kings, or emperors. Of this succession of seven, we are told, 1st. That five are fallen, i. e., have passed away. 2d. That one is, viz., the sixth, who was then in power. 3d. The other, or the seventh, is not yet come; he is yet to reign. And 4th. When he cometh, he will continue a short space only, or will have a very short reign. All these circumstances put together seem to us to point very directly to the Roman emperors, the word *Basileus*, (Greek, for king,) being usual among the Greeks for a Roman emperor. We commence with Julius, the first of the Cæsars, who, although not by name an emperor, still exercised all the power of that potentate; and it was because he adopted Augustus as his son, that the latter came to

come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth,

the throne. Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. These are the five who had fallen. ONE IS, viz., NERO, who was the successor of Claudius; and the other, who had not "yet come," was Galba, who had a very short reign, agreeing with the declaration, "he must continue a short space." Or even if we begin at Augustus, we then have Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, as the five who were fallen; Galba was the sixth, and Otho the seventh, who reigned even a less time than Galba, viz., only three months. The beast represented the Roman secular power; but when he is spoken of as "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is," the enigma refers, as we have shown, to the popular superstition in regard to Nero. The Apocalypse seems to have been written in the time of the *sixth* emperor, which was Nero, if we begin with Julius Cæsar, or Galba, if we begin with Augustus. But that Nero was the sixth, seems to be evident from the succeeding verse.

11. *The beast that was, and is not.* — The beast that "was and is not," he is the eighth, but he had been one of the seven. Is not a double reign here referred to? To whom then can this refer but Nero? Not that he actually reigned twice, but there was a popular impression that he would do so. He then would be the eighth, having been the sixth. Because, when cut off, his successor would have been appointed, and he, at his return, would have taken rank next after his successor. How true is it, then, if we consider the prevalent expectation in regard to Nero, that the beast that was and is not, even *he* is the eighth, and yet he was *of the seven*. He was "the beast that was, and is not, and YET IS." The return

and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,

of this emperor to the throne is spoken of agreeably to the public expectation; and this shows that the Apocalypse must have been written while that expectation existed, and before subsequent facts showed that it was fallacious. ¶ *Goeth into perdition.* — Perdition, in the Scriptures, is synonymous with destruction. The Greek word that we find in this place is translated both these ways in the New Testament. Judas was called the "son of perdition," because he was utterly lost to the church. Goeth into perdition signifieth, goeth into destruction. The being referred to in the verse before us was entirely cast out from power, and destroyed. When Napoleon, for instance, was thrown down from his high power, driven out of France by the forces of Europe, obliged to give himself up a prisoner to the commander of a British vessel of war, and was sent to St. Helena to spend the rest of his days, he went "into perdition;" he was destroyed root and branch, so that not a vestige of his former glory remained.

12. *Ten horns.* — Having finished what he had to say upon the seven heads, the revelator next proceeded to explain the ten horns. They represented ten kings, i. e., ten lesser rulers, who had not been exalted to imperial power, but who received power for a short time with the aid and coöperation of the beast, the highest secular authority. The revelator drew this metaphor of the ten horns from Dan. vii. 7, 20, 24. In the last quoted verse it is said: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that arise." Zechariah uses the figure of the horn to signify earthly potentates; chap. i. 18, 21. As to what particular ten kings are intended by the revelator in the pas-

which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

sage before us, we shall not undertake to say; but there seems to be no room to doubt, that they were contemporaneous rulers, who had submitted to the imperial power of Rome. The empire consisted of many nations, or, in the words of the revelator, of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The rulers of these different nations, called kings in the Greek, having submitted to Rome, were permitted to reign, under subjection to the empire, and hence it is said: "they receive power as kings for one hour (i. e., for a short time) with the beast." They were for a time united in their devotion to the empire, and gave their power and strength unto the beast. But this would not long continue. Great changes were soon to take place.

13. *These have one mind.*—They were at this time united in maintaining the power of the beast, that is, the secular power of the empire. They consented to be tributary. But this was not long to remain, as is evident from ver. 16.

14. *These shall make war with the Lamb.*—These kings being for the time united with the beast, and reigning under his concurrence and observation, should like him oppose and persecute the Christians. Herod, Pilate, Festus, Felix and Agrippa, were all opposed to Christianity. Jesus forewarned his disciples that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake; Matt. x. 18; Mark xiii. 9; Luke xxi. 12. Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles and kings, &c.; Acts ix. 15. These kings opposed Christianity, and persecuted the disciples of Jesus, and

14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

hence are said "to make war with the Lamb," war being put in this place, as it is in many others, for spiritual contests. ¶ *The Lamb shall overcome them.*—Jesus was the Lamb of God; John i. 29; and there is no character in which he appears in the Apocalypse more frequently than in this; and as it was in this sacrificial character that war was made upon him, so in this character he defends his cause, and overcomes his enemies. For with the meekness of the Lamb, he combines great power; "he is Lord of lords and King of kings;" and his possession, his subjects, his spiritual warriors, are called and chosen and faithful. Jesus was not an earthly king; he was not "king of the Jews" in the sense in which they accused him of a design to usurp the power over them. His kingdom was not of this world; but it was the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven,—an everlasting kingdom. Jesus had power over the hearts of men, for "all power in heaven and on earth was committed unto him;" Matt. xxviii. 18. Jesus received his power from the original source of all power, from the "God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible;" Deut. x. 17; from "the blessed and *only* potentate," the primitive "King of kings and Lord of lords;" 1 Tim. vi. 15. See, also, Rev. xix. 16. This is the reason why he must overcome; and second, there is the additional reason that his forces are not promiscuous, but called and chosen and faithful. Collec. see Rom. viii. 30—37. Chosen, Mark xiii. 20; Acts ix. 15; 1 Peter ii. 9. Faithful, Col. i. 2, and 2 Tim. ii. 2.

15. *The waters which thou savest,*

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and

nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and

&c. — It was said in verse 1, that the woman sat "upon many waters." This is the metaphor now to be explained. She sat upon many waters, and she also sat upon the beast. The beast, as we have shown, denoted the secular power of the empire, by which the strength and grandeur of the city of Rome were sustained. By the waters are intended "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." In the language of the prophets "*waters*" denote a great multitude of people. See Isaiah viii. 7, 8: "Now, therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." These waters undoubtedly represented the forces of the king of Assyria. Once more. Jer. li. 12, 13: "Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the Lord hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness." Babylon, like Rome, is said to dwell upon many waters, i. e., to be sustained by great multitudes of people. Beyond all doubt, the author of the Apocalypse was well instructed in the style of the sacred prophets. Jesus described the commotions among the people at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by "the sea and the waves roaring." This, then, is the understanding we are to form of this

verse. The woman (Rome) was said, in the first place, to sit upon the scarlet-colored beast, ver. 3, because she was sustained by the empire; and she was the directing power, and one of the chief glories of that empire. But she was said to sit on "many waters," ver. 1, because she was sustained by immense multitudes of people. Persons from all parts of the then known world flocked to her; and hence, as the revelator has said, in explaining his own metaphor, "The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

16. *And the ten horns shall hate.* — These ten horns are mentioned in ver. 3 of this chapter, where it is said, the scarlet-colored beast had seven heads and ten horns. Beyond all doubt this is the same beast mentioned in xiii. 1, and he is there said to have had "seven heads and ten horns." These ten horns represented ten kings; xvii. 12; and hence we are told that upon each horn there was a crown, the sign of royalty; xiii. 1. These ten were heathen kings, and hence they made war with the Lamb. But it could not be supposed that Rome could always maintain her power over these subordinate kingdoms, without difficulty. In process of time, therefore, they begun to hate her; they begun to be suspicious of the influence of the city; and it is a well-known matter of fact, that afterwards the capital was removed almost to the bounds of Asia. The subordinate kings for some time hated the city of Rome; and we must therefore regard this verse as a prediction of the calamities that would soon befall Rome. Her glory would depart. She would be burned with fire; she would become comparatively a miserable and desolate place; xviii. 2; the imperial countenance and protec-

shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their

hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

tion would be taken away; she would be left to decline and fall; and would in time sink until she became the mere shadow of her former greatness. All this did happen shortly after the Apocalypse was published. The tributary kings, designated by the ten horns, became embittered against the city; they came to "hate the woman" whom they once loved; and they made her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burned her with fire. The revelator evidently gets this figure from Ezekiel's description of the wickedness and punishments of Jerusalem. The following long quotation leads us to think so: "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; behold, therefore, I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all *them* that thou hast loved, with all *them* that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thy

houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry;" Ezk. xvi. 35—42. The revelator says, they shall "devour her flesh." This is also a figure for war and destruction. "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy;" Deut. xxxii. 42. Rome was also to be burned with fire. This may be understood either with or without metaphor. If the former, the fire stands for the fierceness of the divine judgments. If the latter, we know that Rome suffered severely from actual conflagration. See chapter xviii. 8, 10.

17. *Put in their hearts.* — God had a purpose in all this, and an overruling agency. He put it into the hearts of these tributary kings to fulfil his will; and his will was fulfilled, in the first place, by their giving their kingdom unto the beast for a time. Not that such a thing could be his *ultimate* purpose, as though he might rest in it *as an end*; but it was a means whereby he accomplished his will, in the same manner as the enmity of Joseph's brethren accomplished the exaltation of Joseph, and the enmity of the rebellious Jews to the Lord Jesus caused his religion to spread throughout the world. Hence it is said, that Jesus was delivered into wicked hands "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The kings were to give their

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

power to the beast, "until the words of God shall be fulfilled," i. e., the words of God in regard to the reign of the beast. He was to continue only for a time, signified by the "forty and two months." When this time was fulfilled, then the kings would withdraw their support from the empire, and hate the woman or city of Rome, and its downfall would come.

18. *The woman is that great city.*—The woman is the city—the great city; and Rome was then the mistress of the world. She reigned over the kings of the earth, as has been shown; for they acknowledged for a time her supremacy, although afterward they hated her.

The revelator having thus been shown that the destruction of Rome was at hand, we shall find that in the next chapter the fall of that great city is more particularly described.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Preliminary Remarks.*—In the last chapter we saw the city of Rome described under the metaphor of a woman, sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast. She appeared in great magnificence. She was arrayed in purple and scarlet, the imperial colors; and was decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. "The woman which thou sawest (said the angel to the revelator) is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth;" chap. xvii., last verse. The 18th chapter forms a part of the vision promised to the revelator, xvii. 1: "Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore." The woman is first seen riding on the beast; xvii. 3. The beast is described as representing the empire, and the woman as representing the city. So much of the description occupies the

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down

17th chapter. In the 18th is contained an account of the judgment of the woman, promised in xvii. 1.

The plan of this chapter seems to be as follows:

1. The time for the judgment of Rome is represented as being come; verses 1, 2.

2. Reasons for it are given; ver. 3.

3. The Christians are called upon to come out of her, to avoid the impending calamities; verses 4—8.

4. The lamentation over the city in the next place occurs, viz., 1st, of the friendly kings; verses 9, 10; 2d, of the merchants; verses 11—16; 3d, of the seamen; verses 17—19.

5. Heaven is called on to rejoice, with all the holy apostles and prophets, for that which the worldly-minded mourn to see; ver. 20.

6. The judgment comes, as described, verses 21—24.

1. *Another angel come down from heaven.*—One angel having described the woman and the beast, another angel is introduced, in the arrangement of the scene, to describe the judgment. For aught that appears the revelator is still under the guidance of "one of the seven angels," mentioned xvii. 1, who, after showing him the woman and the beast, shows him, in the next place, another mighty angel coming down from heaven, to declare and carry forward the judgments. Such was probably the plan of the revelator's imagery. The angel came down from heaven; he was a messenger from God, and was clothed with power to fulfil the divine will. ¶ *Lightened with his glory*—He was all glorious too; the earth was lightened with his glory. This is a sublime metaphor—the earth made radiant with the glory of the angel's presence. But it is no flight of the revelator's fancy, for he him-

from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon

self probably copied the figure from Ezekiel. See Ezk. xliii. 2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth shined with his glory."

2. *He cried mightily with a loud voice.*—It is the intent of these words to give great effect to the proclamation. It was a proclamation of great importance, and it was needful that it should arrest the attention of men. The angel is clothed with power corresponding to his dignity as a heavenly messenger. His voice commanded great attention. He had come from the presence of God, from the place whence God himself looked down upon the earth. And now let us listen to what the angel said. ¶ *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen;*—as if he had said, what was predicted in Rev. xiv. 8 is now to be fulfilled. This language respects Rome, although the name Babylon is used. We have shown repeatedly, that it was the custom of the sacred writers to call one city by the name of another, on account of some similarity either in its character, or its fate. Babylon, of old, had been given up to destruction; and Rome being given up to destruction, is called Babylon. The proverb, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," is of prophetic origin, and not original with the revelator. See Isa. xxi. 9: "And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." And Jer. li. 8: "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so she may be healed." The revelator's description in all respects is evidently taken from the prophetical

the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

account of the fall of Babylon. Its inhabitants are supposed to have been exterminated, or to have fled. ¶ *The habitation of devils.*—Demons were supposed to dwell in desolate and gloomy places. This was the prevailing notion among the Jews; and the imagery therefore is built upon it. The unclean spirit, mentioned Matt. xii. 43, wandered through dry or desolate places. The demoniac described in Mark v. roamed among the tombs. The object of the revelator, therefore, in saying that Rome should be the habitation of devils, satyrs, or demons, was to show that it should become very desolate, compared with its former grandeur. Those animals that flee from the haunts of men shall come and dwell in the place where the city once stood in magnificence. This is exactly the idea expressed by Isaiah, in describing the fall of Babylon. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is nearly come, and her days shall not be prolonged;" Isa. xiii. 19—22. How frequently does the revelator draw his metaphors, and almost his very language, from the prophets. The application of prophetic language to the fall of Rome, we shall

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the mer-

consider more fully, before we close our comments on this chapter. In addition to the passages quoted above, see Isa. xxxiv. 10—15; Jer. l. 39; li. 37.

3. *All nations have drunk of the wine.*—Here are mentioned the reasons of her punishment. She had led all nations into sin, even the kings and great men of the earth. Her influence had been very wide and very injurious. There is a double metaphor in this verse. 1st. The nations have been made drunk with wine. 2d. With the wine of fornication. She exhilarated and maddened them with her inflammatory vices. She excited their passions, and almost led them captive at her will. Hence her influence is compared to that of wine. Her sins are described under the figure of offences against chastity, which is a figure frequently occurring in the Bible, and as often in the New Testament as in the Old. See the notes on ii. 14, 20; xvii. 2, 4. The Apocalypse bears a strong relation to other parts of the divine word. The same subject is continued here which was commenced in chap. xiv. See ver. 8 of that chapter. Because Rome made the nations drink of the wine of her wickedness, God would pour out upon her the wine of his wrath; xiv. 10. This wine of his wrath was represented as being in the seven vials; xv. 7. These seven vials of wrath were the seven last plagues, because in them was to be *filled up*, or finished, the wrath of God; xv. 1; and these seven vials were all to be poured out *upon the earth*; xvi. 1. By bearing these facts in mind, the reader will perceive that all these chapters are connected the one with the other; that the thread of the subject is not broken. Having

chants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out

foretold the judgments under the metaphor of the vials, in the 16th chapter, the revelator foretells the judgment of the city more particularly in the 17th. Compare xvii. 2, 4, with xiv. 8. The subject begun in the 14th is continued to the 18th, and further. ¶ *And the merchants of the earth.*—These, it is said, had waxed rich, through the abundance of her delicacies. It is evidently the destruction of a city, or country, upon the margin of the sea, that the revelator was describing, and not an ecclesiastical body. We see no reason whatever to suppose that he had any reference to the papal church. Some commentators have presumed, that Babylon in this chapter represented Rome papal; and the merchants, were her clergy, who traded in spiritual trifles and trinkets, and other ecclesiastical wares; but persons who have given such an interpretation have, in our opinion, taken counsel of their prejudices, rather than of sound judgment. We shall not stop to consider this subject further in this place; but we may refer to it again.

4. *Another voice.*—The one voice had proclaimed the fall of Babylon; the other called on all who would not participate in the judgment of the city to come out of her. ¶ *Come out of her, my people.*—Separate yourselves from her; lest ye partake of her sins, and receive of her plagues. There was danger in living in the midst of so much extravagance, dissoluteness, and paganism. Weak professors would be made to fall. The only safety consisted in an entire separation from the power of the adversary, and the dangers in which he was placed. So God counselled Lot to flee from Sodom; Gen. xix 15, 16. When any city of old was

of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that

ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached

doomed to destruction, the faithful that were therein were counselled to leave it. The revelator had the example of the prophets for the advice he gave to the Christians in Rome. Among other instances, see Isa. xlviii. 20, and lii. 11; Jer. l. 8, and li. 6, 45. The apostle Paul besought his brethren at Corinth to come out from among the heathen: "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you;" 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Whether the command, "Come out of her, my people," (in the chapter we are considering,) meant, leave the city of Rome, quit the place entirely, as Lot left Sodom; or whether it meant merely a moral separation, — an injunction to keep clean of all sinful connection, to guard against paganism and all the vices of that great city, we will not undertake to decide. ¶ *Be not partakers of her sins.* — The object was to guard the Christians against "partaking of her sins," that they might not "receive of her plagues." If they did not offend in the former, they would not suffer in the latter. The command to "come out," is to be regarded as a kind of proverbial expression, and should not be interpreted too strictly. It certainly did mean as much as this: "Separate yourselves from her in a moral point of view; keep yourselves perfectly clean from all her vices;" and this was truly the most important matter. ¶ *That ye receive not of her plagues.* — Here the subject of the plagues comes up once more. There is an unbroken thread of illustration running through these chapters. The plagues were temporal judgments;

ix. 20. They were death, and mourning, and famine, and conflagration; xviii. 8. Surely these judgments were on the earth; xi. 6; xvi. 1. And they were the last plagues; xv. 1. We are not to look for any plagues in the Apocalypse after these. In them is filled up, or finished, the wrath of God. These plagues are mentioned finally near the close of the Apocalypse, where the churches were told, that if "any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;" xxii. 18. None other plagues were threatened, remark, than those *written in this book.* i. e., the Apocalypse; and these were death, mourning, famine and conflagration.

5. *Her sins have reached unto heaven.*

— Rome was punished only for her sins. She was not punished for her blindness any further than it was guilty blindness. This might have been inferred from the preceding verse. If the Christians did not partake of her sins, they did not receive of her plagues. It was for her sins, and for her sins only, that she was judged. Her sins were very great. It is said they "reached unto heaven." Some have supposed the idea to be this: the sins have reached up to God, so that he observes and takes note of them. We prefer the other interpretation. It is a hyperbole for exceeding greatness. A similar figure occurs in the description given by Nebuchadnezzar of the tree seen by him in his vision: "I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth;" Dan. iv. 10, 11. And when Daniel came to interpret the vision, he said: "It is thou, O king, thou art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and"

unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

thy dominion to the end of the earth;" ver. 22. So the "rage that reacheth up unto heaven," 2 Chron. xxviii. 9, was an exceeding rage. God's faithfulness is very great,—hence it is said to "reach unto the clouds;" Psal. xxxvi. 5. Again: "Thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds;" Psal. cviii. 4. But there is no difficulty in understanding where the revelator found his figure. In taking the prophetic descriptions of the wickedness and fall of Babylon for the purpose of showing the wickedness and fall of Rome, which was the Babylon of the revelator's time, [and there were many points of resemblance between the two cities,] he would, of course, adopt the prophetic hyperboles, and other figures. Hence we find, that the figure we are considering occurs in Jeremiah's description of the fall of Babylon: "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. \* \*

\* \* We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country; for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies;" li. 8, 9. ¶ *God hath remembered her iniquities.*—In strict speech, God can be said to forget nothing; but in the language of the Scriptures, God is said to forget. Of course, such language is not to be construed literally. It would make confusion worse confounded; for in one form of speech God is said to punish men by *forgetting* them; and in another form, he punishes by *remembering*. We must seek the true sense of the Scriptures, without any disposition to carp or cavil. In the Apocalypse, sins are said to come up in remembrance before God, when the time of their punishment has come. "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath;" Rev. xvi.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto

19. See the language of the woman to the prophet Elijah: "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" 1 Kings xvii. 18. See, also, Ezk. xxi. 23, and xxix. 16. So when good deeds are rewarded, they are said to come up in remembrance before God, as in the case of Cornelius: "Behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God;" Acts x. 30, 31. For God to remember a sin, therefore, in the language of the prophets, was to regard it as an unforgiven offence; to call it to remembrance, was to call it up for judgment and punishment; and to remember it no more, was fully to forgive it, and wash it away, and to regard the penitent as though he had never sinned. Thus the language of God through the prophet Jeremiah: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more;" xxxi. 33, 34. "Her sins have reached unto heaven," i. e., they have been very great, and "God hath remembered her iniquities," i. e., hath remembered them to punish them, as we shall see in the next verse.

6. *Reward her even as she rewarded you.*—In the language of the Scriptures, to *reward* signifies to punish evil, as well as to recompense righteousness. Under the Mosiac law, "every transgression received a just recompense of reward;" Heb. ii. 2; Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Peter

her double according to her works: in the cup which she

hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glo-

ii. 13; Rev. xxii. 12. "Reward her even as she rewarded you." This is not done to encourage retaliation in others, nor is it done for the purpose of retaliation, but on the principle above suggested, viz., that of rendering to men according to their works. God pours out the wickedness of men upon them; he makes them eat of the fruit of their own doings. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts;" Jer. ii. 19. Such is the principle of the divine government. God is said to visit the iniquities of men upon them, because retribution is all under his wise direction and care; and the saints even are sometimes said to punish the wicked, because they are made the agents, or executors, of the divine will.

¶ *Fill to her double.* — When sins are *fully* punished, when the cup of judgment, or wrath, is filled to the brim, and running over, the sinner is said to be punished *double*; but nothing more is meant than that the punishment was *certainly full and adequate*. Perhaps the expression was adopted from that part of the Mosaic code which required the thief to "restore double for what he had stolen;" Exod. xxii. 4, 7. The Lord added to Job double for all he had lost; Job xlii. 10. It was said of Jerusalem, that she had "received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins;" Isa. xl. 2. The revelator, who abundantly proved himself to have been a diligent student of the prophets, perhaps drew his style in this instance from Jer. xvi. 18: "And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things." The cup which

Rome had filled refers doubtless to the cup mentioned xvii. 4, which was "full of abominations," with which the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk; xvii. 2. The command is, fill to her double; i. e., pour out her wickedness upon her; fill her to satiety with her own doings. The portion of a man's cup, in the style of the Scriptures, is the punishment which he deserves, and which God inflicts upon him. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup;" Psal. xi. 6. Of the wicked it is said, "Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them;" Psal. lxxiii. 10. As Rome was to be fully punished, though not unjustly, it is said, "fill to her double." She had made the nations drink of the cup of her abominations, and she was made, therefore, to drink of the cup of God's indignation. See xiv. 9—11. This drinking of the cup of God's indignation is the same as suffering the plagues which fell on Rome, both the city and the empire; for, at the pouring out of the seven vials it is said: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath;" xvi. 19. From this it appears certain that the punishment described in xiv. 10, 11 is none other than that of the vials. And the vials were surely *all* to be poured out *on the earth*; xv. 1; xvi. 1—8, 10, 12, 17.

7. *So much torment and sorrow give her.* — This shows that the filling of the cup double, mentioned in the preceding verse, was not intended to conflict with the principle of rendering to every man according to his works. It was evidently a hyperbolical expression, the intent of which is exactly showed in the words of this verse: — "How much she hath glori-

rified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith

fi'd herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her;" i. e., reward her according to her works. We should not be justified in inferring from this verse that God was unwilling mankind should live happily on the earth. True and solid happiness is always to be found in the way of well doing. But Rome did not seek to live happily, in the true sense of that word, but *deliciously*. She gave herself up to pleasure, and "she that liveth in pleasure [i. e., who lives for that alone] is dead while she liveth;" 1 Tim. v. 6. When men live for pleasure merely, they may perhaps live deliciously, but they do not find

"What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,  
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy."

"A good man shall be satisfied from himself;" Ps. xiv. 14. He has within himself sources of real satisfaction; he is of all men most happy. He has "rest to his soul." But Rome did not seek for true happiness, but false delight. She gave no heed to the call of duty, but sought pleasure only; "she glorified herself and lived deliciously;" and in proportion to her wickedness were her torment and sorrow measured out to her. ¶ *Saith in her heart, I sit a queen.* — When she was in the height of her power and glory, she comforted herself with the reflection, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow;" but was she not fatally deceived? This is so evidently taken from Isaiah's description of the pride of Babylon, that we cannot forbear the quotation: "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms;" Isa. xlvii. 5. "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thy heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children;" vs. 7, 8. "Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off; and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know;" ver. 11. How was Babylon of old lifted up! How blind was she to the inevitable consequences of her actions! What disappointments awaited her! So with Rome, the Babylon of the Apocalypse. She sat a queen, in her own estimation. She feared no widowhood, no loss of children. Being represented by a woman raised to the highest pinnacle of earthly grandeur, her approaching state of humiliation is represented by the sorrows of the same woman, when reduced to widowhood, and bereft of her children, on which she hoped to lean for support in her declining years. This should be a lesson to all, not to be presumptive, vain, self-confident, but to remember that there is no height of human grandeur from which men may not be thrown down. Babylon of old fell; Jerusalem fell; Rome fell: That immense empire, which embraced almost the whole known world, was wasted away. God is the ruler among the nations. Righteousness alone is true exaltation; sin is a reproach, and will bring any nation down to the dust.

8. *Plagues.* — The plagues are here mentioned once more. See the long note on xv. 1. They are there called "the last plagues," because they were the only ones that remained to be described in the Apocalypse, and because the wrath of God was filled up, or finished, by or in them; xv. 1, 6, 8. They were all descriptive of temporal

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she

shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

judgments, for the whole seven of the vials were poured out on the earth; xvi. 1, 9; xviii. 4. The whole series of plagues, commencing with xiv. 9—11, and extending to the end of the Apocalypse, was descriptive of temporal judgments. The figure of pouring out the wrath of God is kept up through the whole, the mixture of wrath being in some cases contained in a cup, in others, in bowls, or vials; but this slight change in the imagery makes no change in the sense. ¶ *Come in one day.*—Her plagues were her punishments; and are expressly said to be “death, and mourning, and famine,” and burning with fire. These, we are told, shall come *in one day*. We are not to understand this strictly, as of a day of twenty-four hours. The phrase “one day” is used in the Scriptures to signify a short time. “Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day;” Isa. ix. 14. “And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;” x. 17. “Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children;” lxvi. 8. Thus when it is said her plagues shall come in one day, the meaning seems to be, that they should not come consecutively, but together; that no time of any importance should intervene between them. ¶ *Death, and mourning, and famine.*—These judgments, “death, mourning, and famine,” are often mentioned as national judgments, by the sacred writers. They are the consequences of war, which devastates a country more than any other cause. The march of a victorious army towards Jerusalem is thus described by the prophet Joel: “A fire devoureth before them, and behind

them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them;” ii. 3. ¶ *She shall be utterly burned with fire.*—Those who have paid a careful attention to the style of the Apocalypse will see no occasion for understanding this strictly. Rome suffered greatly from fire, about the time the Apocalypse was written, when Nero made so conspicuous a figure. It is well known, that he sought to throw the blame of the conflagration on the Christians, as though they were a band of incendiaries; and as a punishment, to cover up the atrocity of his charge, he ordered that numbers of them should be dressed in the skins of beasts and worried to death by dogs; and others were smeared with pitch, and then attached to crosses, and set on fire, to serve as human torches in the gardens of the emperor, where the usual games of the circus were performed, Nero himself driving a chariot, in the habit of a charioteer. In addition to this, Rome suffered greatly afterwards by conflagrations. ¶ *Strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her.*—All the sacred writers speak of the power of God as being very great. He raiseth up and casteth down. The mighty in his hand are as nothing. He was abundantly able to execute all the threatened judgments upon Rome, notwithstanding she was regarded as the mistress of the world.

9. *Committed fornication and lived deliciously.*—See the comments already offered on verses 3 and 7 of this chapter. These kings, who had been infatuated and inflamed by the splendor and the vices of Rome, would of course bewail her misfortunes. They beheld her decline and overthrow. They saw her influence depart; so that, in comparison with what she had been, she would be almost as nothing.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying,

This took place not long after the Apocalypse was written, or at any rate it commenced to take place. The wickedness of Rome increased; her glory declined. So much for the city itself. If Rome be put for heathenism, as some writers understand it, it is a well known fact that it greatly declined. In less than three hundred years, its power was almost utterly prostrated throughout the empire, and Christianity established in its place. The seat of the empire was removed from Rome to Byzantium, the name being changed in honor of Constantine—Constantinople signifying the city of Constantine. Taking all the facts into consideration, we incline to the opinion, that the fall of Rome was represented to be thorough and complete, in the hyperbolic language of the Apocalypse. It is certain she was greatly burned with fire, although not utterly destroyed; her influence died away; her glory departed; the throne was removed; she fell, and has not since risen to that height of power again. Heathenism died utterly out; and the city became the place of the Pontiff, the leader of a large branch of the Christian Church. Rome now has nothing of her ancient outward glory; but she is as much distinguished in our day for her devotion to the Christian religion, as she was in the days of the revelator for her devotion to heathenism.

10. *Alas, alas! that great city.*—This adds nothing to the description in the preceding verse, and is to be regarded only as filling up the imagery. These kings had a due regard

Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold,

to their own safety. They stood afar off for fear of the torment; and lamented the fall of the city. ¶ *Is thy judgment come.*—We have already mentioned so frequently the judgments denounced in the Apocalypse, that it seems scarcely necessary to offer anything further here. The judgment was a present temporal judgment. It *had come*. See verse 8 of this chapter; also the notes on xiv. 7; xv. 4; xvi. 5—7; xvii. 1; xix. 2, and xx. 12, 13. If the student of the Scriptures will observe carefully those notes, he cannot fail to gain a correct idea of the scriptural doctrine of judgment.

11. *Merchants of the earth.*—After the kings, came the merchants to bewail the decline of their trade. They are described as weeping and mourning at the loss of their profits. ¶ *No man buyeth their merchandise any more.*—The trade of Rome was greatly broken up in the course of the troubles that came upon her. It is evident that the revelator draws this part of his vivid description of the destruction of Rome from Ezekiel's description of the downfall of Tyre. Let the reader turn to the 26th and 27th chapters of that prophet, and read them carefully. He will see that they are the model which the revelator copies. The hyperboles are to be understood with much latitude of interpretation.

12, 13. *Gold, and silver, and precious stones, &c.*—We must refer here again to Ezekiel's description of the merchandise of Tyre. As if the revelator had said, this destruction of Rome shall much resemble the destruction

and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour,

of ancient Tyre, when her great and extensive trade, the foundation of her riches, power and pride, was totally stopped — when she lost all her rich merchandise, which consisted in all sorts of valuable commodities, such as gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, scarlet and thyine wood, all curious manufactures in ivory, precious wood, brass, iron and marble: she shall trade no more in those things upon which pride and luxury have set such a value, as spices and perfumes, wine and oil, the finest flour and corn; nor shall she trade in beasts and sheep, in horses and chariots, in grooms who go with the horses to take charge of them, and in the souls of men, or human beings. Merchandise were all these articles; the merchants of Tyre, and after them the merchants of Rome, traded in them all. One of the most palpable perversions of the book of Revelation consists in giving to these passages a spiritual sense, and in supposing them to apply to the Roman Catholic Church. That church, we have no doubt, has many errors, and has been guilty of great extortion, cruelty, bargaining and manœuvring in spiritual things; but in our judgment the description of the revelator, which we are considering, has no reference to the Church of Rome. It respects Rome pagan and not Rome papal. Some writers have supposed the various kinds of wares mentioned to be pardons, indulgences, dispensations, and the like trifles — matters which

and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things which were made rich

we suppose did not enter into the mind of the revelator at all, when he wrote the Apocalypse. Such interpretations belittle the book; and render certain of the Protestant commentators upon the Apocalypse a byword among judicious Catholics. It was the fall of the city of Rome, as the head quarters of the heathen empire, that the revelator was describing; and he saw fit to employ the language of the prophet. It may not be precisely appropriate in every particular; but as a whole it answered the revelator's purpose.

14. *Fruits that thy soul lusted after.* — This is a part of the general description; and shows the miseries that were to be brought upon the city by the suspension of the trade of the merchants. Their business was not only lucrative to themselves, but was advantageous to others, and brought the means of luxury and enjoyment to Rome. Of these things the city of course would be deprived; and hence it is said, "Thou shalt find them no more at all."

15. *Shall stand afar off, weeping and wailing.* — These merchants had been previously represented as weeping and mourning for themselves, because no man bought their merchandise any more; see verse 11. But now they mourn for the city itself. They had been made rich by her, and they felt a sense of gratitude. Fearful of being involved in her torment, they are represented as standing afar off, weeping and wailing.

by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas ! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls !

17 For in one hour so great

16. *Alas, alas ! that great city.* — It was the imperial city. It was decked in great magnificence. The imperial colors, purple and scarlet, added to her beauty, and she was ornamented with gold and precious stones and pearls, precisely like the woman who sat on the beast, xvii. 4. But in one hour so great riches came to nought. That a raiment of purple and fine linen was a sign of great wealth, is evident from Luke xvi. 19. Speaking of the purple, scarlet, &c., Professor Stuart very justly remarks, "Correspondencies to each of these articles, in the spiritual meaning of the whole passage, will hardly be sought for by any one, excepting by him who is ignorant of the true nature and design of tropical and symbolical language."

17. *For in one hour.* — The first section of the 17th verse evidently belongs to the preceding subject. ¶ *And every ship-master, &c.* — We have now come to the lamentation of the seamen, the captains of ships, the sailors, and all who trade by sea. These terms embrace all who do business on the mighty waters, whether in ships of war, merchant vessels, or the smaller craft used for purposes of fishing. Rome lay on the river Tiber, not far from the Mediterranean. Her commerce was considerable ; but this description is taken from Ezekiel's account of the fall of Tyre. See xxvii. 27—29. It will not apply exactly to Rome. It is poetical and hyperbolic ; and is intended to apply only in the outline. Tyre was one of the most celebrated

riches is come to naught. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city !

cities of antiquity, the richest and most important commercial mart of Phœnicia. It was renowned for its commerce ; and was the place through which almost all the commodities of the west and the east passed to a market. It was at the eastern limit of the Mediterranean. Rome was not so much of a maritime city as Tyre, but still it had much trade by sea, sufficient, considering the license taken by ancient writers, to justify the application of the language of Ezekiel respecting Tyre. The men of the sea are represented as lamenting the fall of Rome.

18. *Smoke of her burning.* — The smoke of a conflagration continues to ascend after the flames are extinguished. It is a proof, to distant beholders, of the ruin or judgment. Hence, when the divine judgments are spoken of under the metaphor of fire, the smoke is said to be a warning to after generations. It is spoken of as a monument of the justice of God. See Gen. xix. 28 ; Josh. viii. 20 ; Isa. xxxiv. 10. In the last passage named, the smoke of Idumea is said to go up forever. The meaning is, that the judgment would be a perpetual warning to the nations. From this came the figure in the Apocalypse. The Roman persecutors were said to be tormented in fire and brimstone, and the smoke thereof was said to ascend up forever and ever ; that is, it was intended as a perpetual evidence, rising up to the observation of men, of the retributive justice of God. See, also, xviii. 9, and xix. 3. Among the plagues that fell upon Rome, it

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas ! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in

the sea by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles

was said, "she shall be utterly burned with fire;" xviii. 8. There is a mingling here of fact and metaphor. Fire did the work in part; but she also had war, and pestilence, and famine.

19. *Cast dust on their heads.*—It was an ancient custom for persons to cast dust on their heads in seasons of great anguish and sorrow. We know not how the custom originated; but it is sufficient to the explanation of the passage, to show that it was an ancient custom. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas ! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan;" Joshua vii. 6, 7. This proves conclusively that in ancient times persons put dust on their heads in times of great sorrow. Again, "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven;" Job ii. 12. But it should be remarked, that this reference to the custom of casting dust on the head is taken, like the most of the imagery of this chapter, from Ezekiel's account of the destruction of Tyre. It is the seamen who cast dust on their heads in Ezekiel's description, and it is the seamen who do the same thing in the revelator's account. "And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; and shall cause their voice to be heard

against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads; they shall wallow themselves in the ashes; and they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing;" Ezek. xxvii. 29—31. The seafaring men are said to weep and wail for the destruction of the city, because her immense trade contributed so much to their advantage. They were made rich by her; and they were deeply grieved to have the sources of their wealth cut off.

¶ *For in one hour.*—That is, in a short time. Paul said to the Galatians that he did not give place to the false teachers, not even for an hour; (Gal. ii. 5;) that is, not even for the shortest space of time. Such language occurs repeatedly in the Apocalypse. The four angels of the Euphrates (or the military commanders there) were prepared for "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year;" i. e., for any length of service, whether short or long; Rev. ix. 15. The Roman kings, or subordinate monarchs, were said to "receive power as kings one hour with the beast;" xvii. 12; meaning for a short time. To express their surprise that a judgment so great should be inflicted in a time comparatively so brief, the people said: "Her plagues come in one day;" xviii. 8; "In one hour, is thy judgment come;" 10; "In one hour so great riches is come to nought;" 17; "In one hour is she made desolate;" 19.

20. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven.*—Heaven is here personified, and signifies the same as *the church*. The opposite party to heathen Rome is meant. It is the heavenly Jerusalem that is intended—the spirits of just

and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

men made perfect; Heb. xii. 22, 23. Heaven is joined with the holy apostles and prophets, who stood at the head of the church; and would seem by this to intend the body of the church to which they were joined. The word heaven is used in a variety of senses in the Bible. It sometimes means the region of air, as when we say, the fowls of heaven, the clouds of heaven, the dews of heaven, &c. &c. It sometimes stands for God himself, as "I have sinned against Heaven;" Luke xv. 18. It would seem sometimes to stand for the highest order of created beings, as "The heavens are not clean in his sight;" Job xv. 15. It is a word of wide signification. The Christians were called upon to rejoice at the fall of Rome. This is put in opposition to the parties mentioned in the preceding parts of the chapter, who lamented for that cause. That which produced lamentation on the one side, also produced exultation on the other. The Christians were not called upon to rejoice at the misery of their fellow-creatures; this would have been contrary to the spirit of the Lord Jesus. They would rejoice that the power of the oppressor was broken; that he could do no more harm; that he could put no more obstacles in the way of the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; that he could oppress the saints no more. This is the only view we can take of it; for to suppose that the Christians were called on to rejoice in the miseries of their fellow-men, even of their greatest enemies, would set the sense of the passage against the whole tenor of the New Testament. Jesus mourned and wept over Jerusalem. Behold his beautiful apostrophe to that city: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great mill-

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation;" Luke xix. 41—44. All the afflictions that God sends upon men will be overruled for wise and holy purposes. When a man is condemned for crime on earth, we hope his good will be promoted thereby; and nothing is permitted in the way of punishment that would counteract his reformation. All those influences are thrown around him, by the wise and the good, which will result, it is hoped, in his reformation. His punishment is acquiesced in, only as we acquiesce in the amputation of a limb, or the extraction of a tooth, because it will tend ultimately, if our intentions are fulfilled, in the benefit of the patient. God is a being of unerring wisdom. He can commit no error in the choice of means; and he has full power to carry out his will. His means, unlike those of man, will not, cannot, fail. They may appear to us to fail; but there can be no actual failure with God. On these principles, and on no other, can a truly benevolent man, who has the spirit of the Lord Jesus, rejoice in the punishment of men; and in the pouring out of God's wrath and vengeance upon them. On these principles heaven was called on to rejoice, to exult at the fall of Rome. The church was afterwards to have peace; and, the power of the oppressor being broken, the truth would have free course and be glorified. The persecutors would have no rest day nor night; but the Christians would rest from their labors and toils, and their works of success would accompany them everywhere.

21. *Mighty angel took up a stone.*—

stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers,

and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.

To add force to the prediction of the fall of Rome, an angel is represented as taking up a stone, like a great millstone, and casting it into the sea, saying, "After this manner shall that great city Babylon (spiritually bearing that name) be thrown down." This custom of describing the coming destruction of a place, or a people, by some such formality, is a very ancient one. Thus, when Jeremiah was about to describe the desolation of the Jews, he was commanded to "go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests, and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee;" Jer. xix. 1, 2. And afterwards it is said, "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury;" 10, 11. Here we must repeat again, what we have so frequently been called on to say, that the revelator draws his figure from Jeremiah's description of the fall of Babylon. He had been a diligent student of the prophetic writings. See Jer. li 63, 64: "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her."

### 22. *Voice of harpers and musicians.*

— This is but a part of the imagery. The sounds of joy shall all die away; no harp, no pipe, or trumpet shall be heard. Rome shall be filled with mourning. "The daughters of music shall be brought low." It was the revelator's intent to describe a time of great sorrow. So saith Jeremiah in his Lamentations: "The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music. The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim;" Lam. v. 14—17. So when king Darius was in trouble, we are told, that "The king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him;" Dan. vi. 18. To describe, therefore, the desolateness, dulness and misery of Rome, it is said, "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee." ¶ *And no craftsman* — *shall be found any more in thee.* — In addition to the musicians, her mechanics shall desert her; the craftsmen of every kind shall be found no more within her borders. Great allowance must be made here for sake of the imagery. The mere scenic representations must not be misunderstood for facts. It is still the figures of the prophet Jeremiah that the revelator is copying. See Jer. xxv. 10. "Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bride-

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great

groom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle."

23. *Light of a candle shall shine no more.*—This is but an extended representation of the cheerlessness and gloom that were to spread over the city. There shall be no illuminations, no places for business shall be lighted up. The object is to describe desolateness. ¶ *Voice of the bridegroom.*—And this is further carried out by saying, "The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more." In the same manner Jeremiah described the desolateness of Judah and Jerusalem. "Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate;" Jer. vii. 34.—See, also, xvi. 9, and xxv. 10. And let it be noticed, that the return of prosperity to a people or a place is represented as the return of the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, and the renewal of the voice of praise. "Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say Praise the Lord of hosts; for the Lord is good; for his mercy endureth forever; and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord;" Jer. xxxiii. 10,

men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

11. ¶ *Merchants were the great men.*—The merchants of Rome, like those of Tyre, lived like princes; Isaiah xxiii. 8. ¶ *By thy sorceries.*—Rome is said to have deceived all nations by her sorceries. There is no doubt that her influence for evil was widely felt; and sorceries are put for the enchanting and bewitching nature of all her crime. The wickedness of Nineveh is described in a similar manner by the prophet Nahum; iii. 4. Very early did the eastern nations begin to practise divination and magic, which are included under the general name of sorceries. They taught the art of interpreting dreams, and of acquiring the knowledge of futurity. Sorcery was known in Egypt before the time of Moses, and he forbid the Jews from consulting those who practised it; Deut. xviii. 9, 10. Everywhere in the Scriptures such are condemned Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar both had their sorcerers; Exod. vii. 11, and Dan. ii. 2. It is possible that the passage before us is to be understood in two senses, viz., for sorcery itself, by which Rome may have deceived the nations, and also for the bewitching and deceiving effect of her example. In either sense, by her sorceries, "were all nations deceived." The revelator condemns sorcerers, and places them in the catalogue of those on whom the judgments were to fall; xxi. 8; xxii. 15.

24. *In her was found the blood.*—As when a city is captured, the evidences of her former oppressions are expected to be found—stolen treasures buried in her vaults—prisoners of war shut up in her dungeons; so here it is said, "In her was found the blood of prophets," &c. These were the evidences of her guilt. And might not

## CHAPTER XIX.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much

this be truly said of Rome, the place where the Christians had been horribly butchered, and put to death in various agonizing forms?

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Preliminary Remarks.*—We are now drawing closely to the winding up of the scene. We have seen that Rome is fallen, (ch. xviii.,) and we are next to behold the fall of the beast and false prophet, (mentioned in chap. xiii., and several subsequent chapters,) and also the overthrow of the dragon, (mentioned in ch. xii.) This overthrow of the dragon, however, we shall not find described until we come to the twentieth chapter.

1. *And after these things*,—i. e., after the fall of Rome,—*I heard a great voice of much people in heaven*,—the imaginary dwelling-place of God, mentioned in ch. iv.,—*saying, Alleluia*, &c.—Heaven sometimes stands for the church of Christ, as in Heb. xii. 22, 23. This is a song of triumph for the anticipated overthrow of the heathen opposition to Christianity, which had been shown to John, and which he described by the metaphors to which we have given attention in former chapters. This is in keeping with the general character of the book. When the Lamb prevailed to open the seals, there was then a shout of triumph in heaven; v. 8—14. So when the gospel was established and Judaism fell, ascriptions of thanksgiving were sent up to God; xi. 15—17. When the destruction of the beast and his adherents was first intimated, there was a devout recognition of the hand of God as being in these judgments by the Gentile church; xv. 2—4. And when Rome fell, it will be remembered, the word went forth: "Rejoice

people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God:

over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her;" xviii. 20. The rejoicing which was thus commanded is described at the commencement of the 19th chapter. What a striking contrast between the followers of Rome and the adherents of the church of Christ. Among the former "the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all;" the light of a candle shall shine no more; the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more. Among the latter there is a great voice of praise,—*"Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

What means "*Alleluia*?" This word occurs nowhere in the New Testament except in this chapter. It signifies "Praise ye Jah," one of the names of Jehovah. See Psa. lxxviii. 4: "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." Hallelujah, then, signifies, Praise Jehovah, or give "glory to God." There was something much like this, we are told, in the heathen worship; and hence the Greeks had their *Eleleia ia*, that solemn acclamation with which they both begun and ended their peans, or hymns, in honor of Apollo. We are told, also, that certain of the tribes of Indians in North America have the same word in their religious worship, and use it in the same sense. "In their places of worship, or *beloved square*, they dance sometimes for a whole night, always in a bowing posture, and frequently singing, *Halleluyah, Ye-ho vah*, praise ye Yah, Ye-ho vah."—(See Adair's History of the American Indians, as quoted by

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her

fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alle

A. Clarke.) The sense of this strain of praise seems then to be this: "Praise be to God, and ascriptions of salvation, glory, honor, power unto him." The reason for this is stated in the next verse.

2. *True and righteous.*—The acknowledgment of the justice and rectitude of God's judgments we have met with before in the Apocalypse. See xv. 3, 4, and xvi. 5, 6, 7. God is righteous in all his ways. In his judgments, as in all things else, he always has a good end in view. He cannot do wrong. He never punishes men merely for the sake of punishing them. In judgments of the greatest severity, this rule holds good. If it were not so, he would not be a God of rectitude. No description of his judgments, therefore, should lead us to attribute anything unrighteous to him. "He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy," Micah vii. 18. In the New Testament, he bears the character of a Father. He is merciful and gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy; long suffering, very pitiful; in fine, he is good to all and his tender mercy is over all his works. See the long note on this subject, under xvi. 7. ¶ *Are his judgments.*—The judgments now referred to are evidently the judgments of Rome, called the great harlot. The angel said to John, (xvii. 1 :) "Come hither, and I will show you the judgment of the great harlot." In the 17th chapter, the harlot and the beast on which she sat are described. The judgment is described in chapter xviii.; and in xix. 1, 2, we find the church rejoicing at her fall. She had corrupted the earth with her fornication, and now the time of her fall had come; and God avenged the blood of his servants

shed by her hand. He judged the great harlot which had corrupted the earth with her example; and as she had shed the blood of God's servants profusely, he had avenged it at her hand. God judged both Jews and Romans for shedding the blood of his servants. For the Jews, see the notes on vi. 10, 11, and especially xi. 18. For the Romans, see under xiv. 7, where the time of the judgment is largely discussed; also, xvi. 5—7; xvii. 1; xviii. 8—10, and xx. 12, 13. A careful examination of our remarks on these several passages will bring the reader to a competent knowledge of the scriptural doctrine of judgment.

3. *And her smoke rose up forever and ever.*—They repeated the strain of praise; they said again, "Praise to Jehovah;" and then it is remarked, that "her smoke," viz., the smoke of burning Rome, "rose up forever and ever." If we needed any strong illustration to prove that the words "forever and ever" are applied to the duration of temporal judgments, we certainly have it in the case before us. We see not how any man can conclude that the phrase in this instance intends endless duration. Prof. Stuart supposes that the figure is borrowed from the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It may be so. We read that Abraham "Looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace;" Gen. xix. 28. This fact became a matter of frequent reference with the sacred writers; and hence we find Jude saying,— "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set

luia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.

forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" ver. 7. For the remarks of the learned Dr. Whitby on this last-quoted passage, see under xiv. 11, and to the long note on that verse we specially refer the reader. This was the fire with which the cities were destroyed, and cannot have been eternal in any sense different from that in which temporal things are said to be so. The smoke of those cities having been a conspicuous matter of observation for years perhaps, and it being known they were destroyed as a punishment for their sins, the punishment of other rebellious cities was described under the figure of burning and of long-continued smoke. "Her smoke rose up forever and ever," i. e., from age to age. See the comments we have already offered on xviii. 18. If there be any who suppose that the term "forever and ever" implies in every case an absolute eternity, we can only say, that such persons must be ignorant of the scriptural use of it. Nothing will so soon convince a man that such a position is untenable, as a careful study of all the places in the Scriptures in which the phrase occurs. We will adduce a few passages. "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book; that it may be for the time to come, forever and ever;" Isa. xxx. 8. The destruction of Idumea is thus described: "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it *forever and ever*;" Isa. xxxiv. 8—10. There can be no doubt that the punishments here described were temporal punishments;

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell

and yet they are described in almost the precise terms that occur Rev. xiv. 10, 11. Let the reader also consult Jer. vii. 1—7. The 7th verse is: "Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, *forever and ever*." See, also, Jer. xxv. 5: "Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you, and to your fathers, *forever and ever*." We do not deny, that there are instances in which the phrase will bear the sense of strictly endless duration; but in these cases it is the subject itself that convinces us of the fact. But when the phrase is applied to the duration of *time*, to the ascending smoke of a burning city, and to the children of Israel dwelling in the land of Canaan, we know that strictly endless duration cannot be intended. It is our duty to seek to receive the precise sense which the sacred writers sought to convey. For a full argument on this point, see the remarks under xiv. 11, where our opinions are sustained by numerous quotations from the Scriptures.

4. *Four and twenty elders*.—The four and twenty elders are repeatedly mentioned in the Apocalypse. They were imaginary personages, who sat around the throne of God, in the revelator's ideal of that glorious place, and formed in part the court of heaven. They are supposed to be intended as representatives of the Jewish and Gentile churches, twelve (the apostolical number) being put for each. See our remarks on Rev. iv. 4, 10; v. 8, 14; xi. 16; xiv. 3. ¶ *Four beasts*.—The four beasts were symbolical animals, which never had real existence. Each had six wings, and they all were full of eyes within. It is unfortunate that the translators rendered *zoa* beasts, for *living creatures* would be a much

down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen ; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye

better translation in this case. They were intelligent beings, exalted next to the throne of God, and were capable of worshipping him. Whence the revelator derived his metaphor of the four living creatures, may be seen by referring to Ezk. i. 5—14, and the whole of the 10th chapter of that book. Let it be observed, that the four living creatures are represented having as high a degree of intelligence, and being as desirous to worship God, as the four and twenty elders. ¶ *Amen, Alleluia.*—They showed their acquiescence in the infliction of the divine judgments. It was right. The judgments of God are true and righteous altogether. See our remarks on verse 2 of this chapter, and also on xv. 3, 4 ; xvi. 5, 6, 7, where the rectitude of the divine judgments is shown at large.

5. *A voice came out of the throne.*—The revelator keeps up the form of his communication with the heavenly world. He described the dwelling-place of God, and the attendants around his throne, in chapter iv. Subsequently to this chapter, he considers God as residing in that high and holy place, until the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, and from that time he says no more about the distant dwelling-place of God. See xxi. 2—5. Through the first three chapters, nothing is said of the local heaven. It is first introduced in chapter iv., and continues to chapter xx., after which we miss it from the description. The local heaven of the revelator was an ideal place, as the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, were ideal beings, and the throne was an ideal throne. The deity, in whom the revelator most devoutly believed, was

that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty

represented as residing in such a place, surrounded by such attendants, in the poetical style of the Apocalypse, to enable the revelator to give a fashion and form to his drama ; for the work certainly bears the dramatic form in part. Hence the commands come from that high and holy place ; the angels issue out from it ; and the great voices come from heaven, or from the throne. ¶ *Praise our God, all ye his servants.*—Here all the servants of God on earth are called on to praise him for his judgments, after the manner of the elders and the living creatures in heaven. The voice came out of the throne, i. e., from the supposed dwelling-place of God. The intent of it is this : Praise him, for his judgments are true and righteous ; praise him, for he hath judged the great harlot ; praise him, for he hath avenged the blood of his servants.

6. *Voice of a great multitude.*—This is in obedience to the command given in the preceding verse. All the servants of God, and all that feared him, small and great, were called on to rejoice. Well might the revelator say : “I heard as it were the voice [or voices] of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, [a mighty volume of sound,] saying, Alleluia,” praise to Jehovah, &c. ¶ *For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*—The omnipotence of God had been proved by the events that had taken place. The language here is truly sublime and poetical ; and this is the only instance of its occurrence in the Bible. The same sentiment occurs in numerous instances, but the same language nowhere else : “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Of all the enemies that had

thunderings saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice,

opposed the march of his truth, none had been able to succeed against it. Not even the dragon, nor the beast, nor the false prophet, nor all conjoined, with those who worshipped them, could overcome the cause of God. He is omnipotent. He doeth his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." This was a sufficient matter of rejoicing. God is good, he is wise, he is just. He is such a being as every good and just man would desire should reign over the universe. If the dragon reigned, or the beast, what good man could rejoice ? But they were speedily to be overcome ; xix. 20 ; xx. 10. "Alleluia ; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

7. *Let us be glad and rejoice.* — This is the continuation of what was said by the servants of God. They congratulated one another : "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor" to the Lord God. And why ? ¶ *The marriage of the Lamb is come.* — The Lamb is, of course, Jesus, the Lamb of God. His marriage festival is near, and his intended wife hath made herself ready. The nuptial relation is very frequently used by the prophets to describe the relation which God hath to his people. God spake to his people of old in the following strain : "Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name : and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the

and give honor to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God ;" Isa. liv. 4—6. The same figure is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament : "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ;" Eph. v. 25, 26. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the church ;" verses 31, 32. Once more : "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ ;" 2 Cor. xi. 2. Christ, then, is the husband, and the church is his bride. With what propriety of metaphor, therefore, does the revelator say, when describing the descent of the new Jerusalem, that it is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ;" Rev. xxi. 2. ¶ *His wife hath made herself ready.* — At the period which the revelator was describing, the time for the union between Christ and his church had come. The church had made herself ready to receive him. Notwithstanding all the opposition of the Roman authorities, both civil and religious, still the church was destined to be established. The time was at hand when the kingdom of God would come with power, and the new Jerusalem would descend from heaven in all its glory. And that this was the Lamb's wife, is fully evident from Rev. xxi. 9, 10 : "And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous-

shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Be glad and rejoice for this: the new Jerusalem is about to descend from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and the church and the Master will be united forever.

8. *That she should be arrayed in fine linen.*—The church, the Lamb's wife, was to be arrayed in fine linen. This was granted her as an honor. Fine linen was a fabric of great value among the Jews, and, in this case, it is spoken of as the bridal attire. It was an attire of honor, for it was worn by kings. Pharaoh was arrayed in a vesture of fine linen; Gen. xli. 42. Aaron was clad in the same material; Exodus xxxix. 27; and David; 1 Chron. xv. 27; and Mordecai, when he was honored; Esther viii. 15. Dives, in the parable, was clothed in purple and fine linen; Luke xvi. 19. This is sufficient to show that fine linen was a rare and costly attire, and was worn as a vesture of honor. The ephod of the high priest was made of it; Ex. xxviii. 6. It was granted to the church that she should be arrayed in it. ¶ *Clean and white.*—And moreover, it is said that it was clean and white, i. e., all pure; and we are expressly told what this metaphor of the fine linen, clean and white, represents, viz., "the righteousness of saints." How readily this clean white linen reminds us of St. Paul's description of the sanctified church: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish;" Eph. v. 25—27. It does, indeed, rep-

resent the righteousness of saints. Their sins are taken away; they are sanctified and cleansed; they are washed by the power of the divine word, and this is the washing of regeneration; the church is without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. See Rev. vii. 13, 14: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The members of Christ's church were personally pure; and they were pure, not because the purity of Christ had been imputed or attributed to them, but because they had passed through the washing of regeneration. There is no other way in which the sinner can be made righteous. And the proof of his being righteous is his good deeds. Hence St. John says: "He that doeth righteousness is righteous;" 1 John iii. 7. There is no other way to prove that we are really righteous; and every man that doeth righteousness is to be regarded as thus righteous. The church, having been sanctified and cleansed, is said to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,—a metaphor for the righteousness of saints, or their purity and good works. Persons not well acquainted with the Bible sometimes suppose, that the beautiful vestments of fine linen which the redeemed are said to wear, and which bear a resemblance to the wedding garment, Matt. xxii. 12, represent the righteousness of Christ, which has been transferred to believers. The passage before us serves to correct that false notion, since it is expressly said to be "the righteousness of saints." No man can be righteous merely on account of the righteous deeds which another person

ness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he

has performed, and independently of his own deeds. A righteous man will perform righteous deeds himself; and if he does not perform such deeds in his own person, he is not to be regarded as being righteous. He may as well seek to be handsome on account of another's beauty, as to be righteous on account of another's righteousness. Righteousness is a personal thing; and so also is wickedness. We are not sinners because Adam sinned, but because we ourselves have sinned. "Death passed upon all men, *for all have sinned*;" Rom. v. 12. If men may be sinful on account of Adam's acts of sin, and righteous on account of Christ's acts of righteousness, then they may have a character altogether independent of their own acts, which is an absurdity. Adam never made any man a sinner except through the influence of his evil example; and Christ never made any man righteous by being righteous in his room and stead. He gives us the influence of his life, his precepts, his doctrines; and in this way he leads us to purity of heart, and personal righteousness.

9. *Marriage-supper of the Lamb.* — The marriage of the Lamb having come, and his wife having made herself ready, the marriage is to take place; and blessed are they which are called unto the supper. Jesus had said to the church at Laodicea, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" Rev. iii. 20. To be invited to the marriage-supper was a high honor, especially if the host were a distinguished personage. But if a person came to a wedding, he was expected to be clad in the appropriate attire; and for a neglect of this, he

saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I

was liable to be expelled from the assembly. See Matt. xxii. 11—13. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb;" or, as the same thought was expressed in Luke's Gospel: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God;" xiv. 15. To eat bread in the kingdom of God is to feast upon the dainties of the gospel. This kingdom, it will be recollected, had not come in its entire effects when the Apocalypse was written. Almost all the New Testament writers looked forward to it. It came in its full power at the second advent of Jesus, when Judaism passed away, and the gospel was fully established. To this time Jesus seems to have referred, when he said, at the close of the Lord's Supper, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God;" Mark xiv. 25; Luke xxii. 16. Jesus promised to be with his church, in spirit, even after his ascension into glory. In this way, he fulfilled his promise of drinking with them anew in the kingdom of God, — a proof that the Lord's Supper was *not* to be discontinued at the second coming, as has been by some supposed. The rich blessings of the gospel are represented under various metaphors. That of the revelator is striking; xxii. 14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." ¶ *These are the true sayings of God*; — or, in the more common language of our own day, this is God's truth. And such we have shown to be the fact, by the quotations we have made from various parts of the Scriptures.

10. *To worship him.* — Perhaps this

am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11 And I saw heaven opened,

does not mean that the revelator intended to offer divine worship to the angel. It is true, he "fell at his feet to worship him." He was evidently overcome with emotion at the great facts which had been disclosed; but it must be remembered, that falling to the ground in adoration was a mark of respect frequently shown by the Jews to men. Thus Ruth saluted Boaz: "Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" Ruth ii. 10. So Abigail bowed before David: "And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet," &c; 1 Sam. xxv. 23, 24. We see, then, that the act of prostration was a mark of respect often shown to earthly superiors. When the revelator fell at the feet of the angel, the latter said, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant," &c. As if he had said, There is no need of this display of humility on your part: I am a servant like you; I am one of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; let your worship be given to God, who has revealed to me all that I know. ¶ *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*; i. e., I have the testimony of Jesus, and you have the spirit of prophecy, and Jesus has testified through me the things which you prophesy. We are equals, therefore; render no homage to me, but "worship God."

11. *Heaven opened.*—The revelator received his revelations from heaven, described chap. iv., the imaginary dwelling-place of the Most High; as

and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame

if heaven were the place where all the preparations were made, previously to the exhibition to the revelator. See our remarks on ver. 5 of this chapter. Heaven is opened, and the scene begins. ¶ *A white horse.*—This is the same metaphor that was employed when Christ was described as coming forth to conquer his enemies, the Jews; vi. 2. He then went forth conquering and to conquer; and he is now to do the same thing again in reference to the Gentiles. Conquerors rode on white horses. The Roman generals, in returning from their conquests, rode in chariots drawn by white horses. Hence the horse on which the great captain of the Christian army rode was *white*, as a sign of certain victory. See the notes on vi. 2. ¶ *Faithful and True.*—This is evidently one of the titles of the Lord Jesus, and we have found it applied to him before, in the Apocalypse. He is called "the faithful Witness, the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth;" i. 5; and the language in iii. 14 is precisely parallel: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." There is no doubt, then, that Jesus is intended by the "Faithful and True," who rode on the white horse. Once more; in iii. 7: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true," &c. This style is precisely that of the apostle John; and it raises a strong presumption that he was the author of the Apocalypse. See 1 John v. 20. See, also, the note on iii. 7. Jesus was the Faithful and True. ¶ *In righteousness doth he judge,* &c.—He judged the nations righteously. This, it was repeatedly affirmed by the prophets,

of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.

the Messiah should do. "He shall judge the people righteously." The progress of his truth over all the errors of the heathen is represented by the "Prince of the kings of the earth" making war upon them; and the sufferings that his enemies endured under the judgments of God are described by the havoc of war. These figures are of frequent occurrence in the Apocalypse; we find them almost everywhere. In fact, the metaphors of the Bible at large are borrowed from nearly all the arts and occupations that were known to the Jews at the time of the writing of the books. But we have not done with the "Faithful and True." Let us go on with a description of his person.

12. *His eyes as a flame of fire.* — This is the exact description we have heretofore found; Rev. i. 14. The eyes were radiant; they glowed with life. ¶ *On his head were many crowns.* — The crown was the sign of honor and supreme authority. Once Jesus wore a crown of thorns; John xix. 5. That was in the days of his suffering and humility. But when he came forth conquering and to conquer, then he wore not a crown of disgrace but crowns of honor and authority. All kings wear crowns; but Jesus is said to have worn *many* crowns, because he is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He had abundant authority. All power in heaven and on earth was given to him; Matt. xxviii. 18; and especially did he have authority to execute judgment; John v. 22, 27. Under the gospel the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and in view of the facts here suggested, it is said that on his head were many crowns. ¶ *He had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.* — We have met with this description before. See ch. ii.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

17: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." See our remarks on that verse. The figure was perhaps drawn from the fact that the high priest alone could pronounce the name upon his mitre. See Stuart on the verse. Dr. Adam Clarke says, that the Jews never attempt to pronounce the name of Jehovah; and they affirm that the true pronunciation has been lost since the captivity in Babylon; and that no man now knows the true interpretation or pronunciation, but God himself. (See his Com. on this place.) If this be so, it is possible that the expression in this place, and also in ii. 17, is borrowed from the fact. Some suppose there is a reference here to Isa. ix. 6, 7: "His name shall be called *Wonderful*," &c. &c. Having thus described the person of the "Faithful and True," we come now to his nature.

13. *Vesture dipped in blood.* — This is agreeable to the sanguinary character of the metaphor. The Faithful and True has on his war-clothing, which bears marks that he has seen service in the field before this time. The metaphor probably was borrowed from Isaiah lxiii. 1—4. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." These are sanguinary metaphors to apply to the Prince of Peace; but such was the manner of writing in the revelator's day and country. We are not to infer from them that Jesus had any cruelty in his spirit; they are merely the imagery of the chapter. ¶ *The word of God.* — Is this the name the interpretation of which no man knew, but Christ himself? If so, why should we attempt the explanation? The same name, it must be confessed, seems to be referred to both in the 12th and 13th verses. John afterward spoke more fully of this name, viz., in his Gospel. "In the beginning was the *Logos*, or Word," &c.; John i. 1. This name is found only in the writings of John. We shall not attempt the interpretation of it; but it seems difficult to avoid the impression that we see John's style in the Apocalypse.

14. *The armies which were in heaven.* — The next thing in the scene was the armies that followed the True and Faithful. The scene represents these armies as issuing out of heaven, seated on white horses. See xvii. 14, where we are told that they who follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, are "called" and "chosen" and "faithful." They were honorable men, and hence are not compared to foot soldiers, but to the cavalry, the most stately part of an army, all mounted on white horses. They were clothed in fine linen, white and clean; and this shows they were members of the church of Christ, which, as his bride, was adorned in the same manner. Verse 8.

15. *Goeth a sharp sword.* — The metaphor of a sword going out of the

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a

mouth seems to us a most unnatural one. But we are to consider that this sword represents the word of God. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" Heb. iv. 12. Did the revelator quote this figure from the epistle to the Hebrews? or did the writer of the epistle quote from the Apocalypse? We think the latter. We have found the same figure in other parts of the Apocalypse. See i. 16; ii. 12. ¶ *Smite the nations.* — The figure here is borrowed, apparently, from Isaiah. In describing Christ's reign among the nations, in the gospel, he says: "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;" xi. 4. This is certainly a metaphor to show the effect which the word of God produces upon the nations. And the same may also be said of the next sentence. ¶ *He shall rule them with a rod of iron.* — This again is a prophetic metaphor. The rod is a sign of power. Moses, as the leader of the children of Israel, had a rod, called the rod of God. It was the sign of his power as the agent of the Most High; Exod iv. 20; and xvii. 9. Power is sometimes necessarily employed for the correction of the wicked; and the rod or sign then is called "the rod of correction;" Psalms lxxxix. 32; Prov. xxii. 15. Nations whom God uses as agents for the punishment of other nations, are called the "rod of his anger;" Isa. x. 5. The transforming power of the gospel, before which all

rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name

written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all

must fall, is set forth under the metaphor of a "rod of iron," or the rod of God's mouth, as the sword was "the sword of his mouth;" and the effect of God smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth is this: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Compare Isa. xi. 9 with 4. The efficacy of the gospel in overturning all the systems of heathenism is described as follows by the Psalmist: "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel;" *Psa. ii. 8, 9.* ¶ *He treadeth the wine-press,* &c. — This seems to be a quotation from Isa. lxiii. 3; and it is used to show, that as grapes are crushed beneath the feet of him who tramples them, so should the enemies of the church be put down, by the power of Christ and his gospel. See our remarks on xiv. 19, 20.

16. *On his thigh.* — The name was wrought on that part of the vesture which covered the thigh; which is a conspicuous part of a person sitting on a horse. ¶ *King of kings and Lord of lords.* — This name or title is very expressive. Under the gospel, Jesus has all power. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" *John v. 22*; hence he is called "the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords;" *1 Tim. vi. 16*. For his high authority he is said to be the "Prince of the kings of the earth;" *Rev. i. 5*; and in *xvii. 14*, *xix. 16*, he is styled "King of kings and Lord of lords." All through the Apocalypse,

as well as in other parts of the New Testament, and in the prophets, Jesus is represented as having power over the kings of the earth. They hide themselves in the dens at his presence; *Rev. vi. 15*; and before the mighty army of his church they fall, and the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven devour their flesh; *xix. 17*.

17. *Angel standing in the sun.* — The angel of this part of the scene is described as standing in the sun. The *tout ensemble* here is truly sublime. 1st. Heaven is opened, and the "Faithful and True," in appearance most striking and majestic, rides forth into the scene upon a white horse. 2d. Following him come the armies of the faithful upon white horses, beautiful in appearance, their garments of the richest texture, and white and clean. How must such an army have glistened in the light of the sun! 3d. An angel is seen standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice to all the fowls of heaven, to come to the supper of the great God. He was infinitely above them all. An eagle, in its loftiest height, would be immensely beneath him. What a commanding position from which to address the fowls that "fly in the midst of heaven." Could we have an actual vision like that which passed in the imagination of the revelator, the soul would be overcome by the magnificence and sublimity of the scene. ¶ *Gather yourselves together for the supper of the great God.* — In the animated language of the prophets, their predictions are often announced under the form of commands. See *Isaiah xiv. 21*, and *Jer. ix. 17, 18*. The order was given to the brute animals to do only what the revelator meant to predict that they would do. But he quickens and enlivens his style by

the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of cap-

tains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

using the form of a command. The reason for calling the fowls together to "the supper of the great God," will be explained in the next verse.

18. *Eat the flesh of kings.*—In a time of war, kings, and captains, and mighty men, and horses, are slain; and if left unburied, the birds of prey feed upon their bodies. As the revelator had represented Jesus under the figure of a commander of armies, and his saints under that of the armies, and his word under that of the sword, and the struggle between his truth and prevailing errors under that of a contest, so, to carry out and complete the allegory, he speaks of the slain, an immense number, who lie unburied, as food for the vulture and other ravenous birds. By a bold personification, he calls on the birds to come to "the supper of the great God," called *His* supper, on the same principle in which an army employed by Him for the purpose of chastising some rebellious nation is called the rod of *His* anger and *His* indignation; Isa. x. 5. Poets of old were accustomed to describe the fate of warriors in this manner. See the opening of the *Iliad*. We quote from Pope :

"Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring  
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly Goddess,  
sing!  
That wrath which hurled to Pluto's gloomy  
reign  
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain,  
Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,  
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore;  
Since great Achilles and Atreides strove,  
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the  
will of Jove."

David told the Philistines, "I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel;" 1 Sam.

xvii. 46. — See, also, Isa. xviii. 6, and lvi. 9; Jer. vii. 33, and xii. 9. But the particular passage which the revelator seems to have had in his eye, when he drew his allegory, was Ezk. xxxix. 17—20: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God, Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God." Thus it will be seen the figure was not original with the revelator. How appropriate to the revelator's application are the succeeding words of the prophet: "And I will set my glory among the heathen, all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them;" verse 21. "The principal design of the imagery, after all, is to portray in vivid colors the disgraceful death of the followers of the beast. To lie unburied, and thus become the prey of ravenous birds or beasts, was regarded by the ancients with peculiar horror."—*Stuart*. And now the threatening being complete, the war will begin.

19. *The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies.*—These are the op-

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken,

posing armies to those of the Lamb. The revelator, having described the former, introduces now the latter. The beast, (the secular power of the empire,) the kings of the earth, (that were subject to the empire,) and their forces, all conspired to put down Christ and his cause; or, in the figurative language, "to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And what will be the consequence?

20. *The beast was taken.*—This battle is described rather by its consequences than in its details. The victory of the "Faithful and True" was complete. The commander of the opposing army was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which mankind had been deceived. On the subject of these miracles, see on xiii. 14; xvi. 14: and on "the mark of the beast," see the remarks under xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 9—11; xv. 2; xvii. 2; xx. 4. The beast and the false prophet had been united together in their operations; the latter had been a powerful auxiliary of the former; chap. xiii. 11—15; and consequently they both fall together. "The beast was taken, and *with him* the false prophet." The leaders were seized. And what became of them?

¶ *Both were cast alive into a lake of fire.*—They were utterly destroyed, which is signified by their being cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. It is perhaps said that they are cast *alive* into this lake, in order to represent their torment to be the more keen. This is the first instance in which we have met with the figure of "the lake of fire and brimstone," which is purely apocalyp-

and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive

tical, occurring nowhere else in the Bible. We shall seek first for the origin of the metaphor, and afterward for the intent of it. This figure of the "lake of fire and brimstone" unquestionably had its origin in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities. They were overthrown by fire from heaven. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;" Gen. xix. 24. On account of this event, these cities became very noted in the sacred writings of the Jews. The mention of them frequently occurs by way of metaphor or comparison. A wicked city was on that account called Sodom. Moses told the Jews, that if they did not obey God, but forsook him and rebelled against him, their land should become "brimstone and salt and burning," like the overthrow of Sodom, &c., which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath; Deut. xxix. 23. Sodom being overthrown by a shower of fire and brimstone, any land given up to devastation was said to become brimstone and burning. The figure of the shower of fire and brimstone came to be used to represent any severe judgment for sin, as Psa. xi. 5: "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Sodom and the other cities being situated in a low plain, or valley, the place where they stood became a lake, or sea, and is in our day the site of the Dead Sea. This is a lake of brimstone or bitumen, which is continually rising to the surface and floating to the shore, and the shore itself is found to con-

into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

tain large quantities of the inflammable substance. When these cities were burning, they looked to persons on the surrounding high lands as a "lake of fire and brimstone." When Bonaparte, from an elevated position, saw Moscow burning, he described it as an "ocean of flame." The figure, then, of the lake of fire and brimstone originated in the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah; and it was used by the sacred writers to signify a thorough and irreparable destruction. It is a parallel case to the use of Gehenna, Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, which was a place of great impurity during the idolatrous practices of the Jews, and also afterwards a place of severe punishments, became a metaphor, in process of time, for any terrible judgment; and so the vale of Siddim, (where Sodom and her sisters stood,) which had been the place of such an awful and complete overthrow by fire and brimstone, now a lake, abounding in bitumen, became a metaphor for a complete overthrow and total and incurable destruction. When it is said, therefore, that the beast and the false prophet were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, the meaning is, that they were afflicted with very severe sufferings, that resulted in their entire destruction, so that they were as completely overthrown as were Sodom and Gomorrah. Prof. Stuart says, it intends a "speedy and dreadful punishment." The being cast into a "lake of fire and brimstone," intends a severe punishment, like "being tormented with fire and brimstone," in xiv. 10, 11, where we have shown that the metaphor was unquestionably used, (as every one must acknowledge,) by the Jewish prophets, to signify temporal judgments. Let the reader peruse carefully the notes on that verse. The beast and false prophet were cast into fire and brim-

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him

stone like those who had worshipped them. And that this intended temporal punishments is evident from the language of the next verse, where we shall see that "all the fowls were filled with their flesh;" a metaphor that could not be applied to the spiritual and immortal state.

21. *And the remnant were slain.*—In the preceding verse we have an account of the fall of the beast and the false prophet; and in this verse we see described the destruction of their armies. They were slain with the sword of his mouth, or rather, were put down by the power of his word, compared to a two-edged sword. ¶ *All the fowls were filled with their flesh.*—This was added merely to balance the different parts of the allegory, as it had been commenced in verses 17 and 18, and concerning which a sufficient explanation has been given. Does not the whole allegory show that the punishments spoken of in this chapter do not refer to the immortal state? Those who worshipped the beast and his image were, like the beast, tormented in fire and brimstone; xiv. 11. Now, that their fall and destruction did not intend torment in the immortal state, is evident from the metaphor that the fowls were filled with their flesh. The intent of the revelator surely was to represent that their destruction was on the earth. And now, as we are brought to the end of the chapter, there is one thing not to be forgotten. We have learned the destruction of the beast, and the false prophet, and their enemies; but nothing has been said about the overthrow of the great dragon. The dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet, were all described together in their introduction into the Apocalypse, and we might expect they would be grouped together in their fall. To this we reply, that the fall of the dragon is

that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

portrayed in the 20th chapter, and it will be considered in its proper place.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Preliminary Remarks.*—This has been regarded as one of the most difficult chapters in the whole book. What we have already said on preceding chapters will assist us materially in understanding this. The third grand division of the Apocalypse commences at chap. xii., where we first find mention made of the dragon, which represented Rome in its religious character, as distinguished from the beast of chap. xiii., which represented its secular character. The three principal metaphors representing the Roman opposers of Christianity are the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The harlot who sat upon the beast, (chap. xvii.,) we have fully shown was *the city of Rome*, (xvii. 9, 18.) These all made war on the Lamb, — that is, they all opposed the Christian religion. But the truth of Christ was great, and mightily prevailed throughout the Roman Empire, so that Paul said, even when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, speaking of the Christian teachers, “their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;” x. 18. This agrees with the language of Jesus, when speaking of the end of the Jewish age: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come;” Matt. xxiv. 14. All the powers of Rome could not arrest its spread. The Lamb was victorious. “There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and

## CHAPTER XX.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having

his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him;” Rev. xii. 7—9. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;” ver. 11. Still the dragon continued to persecute the woman that brought forth the man-child, (ver. 13,) i. e., the new covenant, under the figure of a woman. The dragon persecuted all who adopted the new covenant. The woman was a metaphor; for, as Paul says, these things are an allegory; Gal. iv. 24; and Jerusalem which is above is free, which is *the mother of us all*; ver. 26. The beast and the false prophet also fought against the Lamb; Rev. xix. 19. But the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, were all three conquered and destroyed. The destruction of the latter two is described xix. 20, 21, i. e., at the very close of the 19th chapter; and hence the 20th chapter opens with an account of the binding or restraining of the dragon, previously to his destruction.

1. *Angel came down from heaven.* — The revelator still keeps in his mind the local heaven, which he first introduced into his drama at chapter iv. 1—4. At the beginning of chap. xxi. he describes, as we shall see, the descent of the new Jerusalem from God out of heaven to men, and God thenceforth dwells not in a distant place; but his tabernacle, or place of rest, is *with men*, and he will dwell with them, and be their God. From the introduction of that tabernacle, we find no further mention of the place described in chap. iv. But that place is kept up in the revelator’s imagina-

the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

tion through the chapter on which we are now remarking. The angel came down from heaven. The scene of the events described in the twentieth chapter is certainly laid on the earth; but the whole description is imaginary; precisely as the armies of heaven, who rode forth on white horses, (mentioned in the preceding chapter,) were imaginary. We must not forget that the whole is allegorical, and is designed merely to set forth the struggle between heathenism and Christianity, and the final triumph of the latter. He who adopts any other principle of interpretation will involve himself in endless fancies. But the chapter we are now expounding has been so frequently misapplied, that it is well to look even at the basis of the allegory, and show in what customs of thinking it had its origin. We repeat, then, that the scene is evidently laid *on the earth*. The whole chapter shows that the earth is contemplated as being in existence, and the nations are distributed over it; see verses 3, 8, 9. This fact *must* be remembered. The angel was said to *come down*, because the dwelling-place of God and of the angels was thought to be *above* the earth. It was called *heaven*, a word of very varied signification, used sometimes to signify the dwelling-place of God, as at the commencement of the Lord's Prayer; Matt. vi. 9; and sometimes to signify a principle, or spirituality, like the invisible but all-powerful kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; Luke xvii. 20, 21, and Rom. xiv. 17. But in the passage before us, it unquestionably signifies the supposed locality first introduced into the Apocalypse at iv. 1—4. ¶ *Key of the bottomless pit*.—The angel brings with him from heaven the key of the bottomless pit, and also a great chain in his hand. The key is a sign of power to confine, or release. In Rev. i. 18, Jesus is said to have "the keys of hell and of

death," to signify that he had power to bind and control them. They were subject to his authority. So those who had power given them to bind and loose things in heaven, were said to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven; Matt. xvi. 19; that is, they received great authority in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. As the dragon was not a real being, but an imaginary representative of the heathen powers, so the bottomless pit was not a reality, but a metaphor, to denote that the dragon was cast down into degradation. He had been exalted to the pinnacle of glory; he was cast down and restrained. The phrase "bottomless pit" occurs only in the following places: Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8; xx. 1, 3. We have explained the metaphor, under ix. 2. Let the reader see the note there. The bottomless pit was an imaginary cavern in the earth, —

"In the lowest depth, a lower deep."

It is only in two cases out of the seven, (viz., ix. 1, 2,) that there can be any pretence that *bottomless* is a just translation; for in the other five cases, the word *abussos* (abyss) stands by itself, without any attempt to increase its force. In the verse before us, the pit was an imaginary cavern, beneath the surface of the earth; and as the revelator desired to represent the restraining of the dragon for a season, he supposes him to be thrust into this cavern. But we are anticipating our remarks on the 3d verse. Let the reader observe carefully what may be said there. ¶ *Chain in his hand*. — This strengthens the metaphor. The angel comes down to the earth to bind the dragon for a season. He brings with him, therefore, two implements, viz., the key of the imaginary pit, cavern, or depth, and the great chain. The plan is, that the dragon is to be secured permanently for a season.

2. *He laid hold on the dragon*.—

## 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which

The dragon represented the empire in its heathen character, as the beast represented its secular character. The angel, the messenger of the Most High, laid hold upon him, and cast him down, and bound him a thousand years. We first read of this dragon xii. 3, where he is called the "great red dragon;" he had great power; he was seen in heaven, i. e., in the firmament, among the stars, many of which he threw down to the earth; he made war on the woman, the representative of Christianity; xii. 4. There was war, and the firmament was the battle-field. The dragon and his angels were on the one side, and Michael and his angels on the other. The dragon and his forces were beaten, and "neither was there place found for them any more in heaven;" 7 and 8. We must, therefore, henceforth look for him somewhere else. To what place was he banished? "The dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, was cast out *into the earth*, and his angels were cast out with him;" xii. 9. He is, therefore, to be contemplated as banished to *the earth*, and there the angel found him, as we perceive, in the verse before us. The scene is laid on the earth. The angel comes down from heaven to the earth, having the key of the bottomless pit, which shows that that pit was on the earth; and he laid hold on "the dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," xii. 9; xx. 2, whom he seems to have found on the earth. ¶ *Which is the Devil, and Satan.*—The dragon is called "that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan." These terms, from long abuse, suggest to many people's minds no idea but that of a fiend, not human, but fallen-angelic; the head of the kingdom of darkness; the almost-equal to God himself. It does not belong to a commentary on the Apocalypse to refute that error. It is sufficient to say here, that by the dragon, and the old serpent, and the

Devil, and Satan, is meant the same thing. The names are put in apposition. They do not signify any particular being, but the heathen opposers of Christianity. The dragon was altogether a fabulous animal, believed perhaps by the ancients to have had a real existence. The prophets used the supposed animal as a metaphor to represent cruel and persecuting men, especially rulers. See Psal. lxxiv. 13: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters;" an evident reference to the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts. We have shown in many instances that the revelator borrowed his imagery from the prophets. The serpent is used by the sacred writers as an emblem of craft and subtlety; and hence we are told (Rev. xii. 9) that "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world." And all these terms, we repeat, signify the same thing. Not that all over the Bible they refer identically to the same individuals; but that in the Apocalypse they refer to the leading heathen opposers of Christianity. We have shown, in the most conclusive manner, in our long note on xii. 9, that nowhere in all the Bible, leaving the Apocalypse out of the argument, does the metaphor of the dragon stand for anything beside human adversaries. The reader should turn back to that note, covering the 205th and 206th pages, and read it carefully. Now if in every other part of the Bible except the Apocalypse the metaphor stands for human adversaries only, why should it not be supposed it stands for human adversaries in that book? Why should a different rule be adopted in applying the metaphor in the Apocalypse, from that which we adopt in regard to its application in every other part of the sacred writings in which it occurs? The seven-headed beast of chap. xiii. is

is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

understood to signify earthly powers; why should not the seven-headed dragon be understood as signifying earthly powers also? On the supposition that the dragon signifies a superhuman adversary, what do his seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns, signify? There is a significance in these things if applied to the Roman Empire; but none at all if applied to a superhuman adversary. Is it not apparent, that the dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and the beast with seven heads and ten horns, both signify one thing under different aspects? There is no reason for considering the dragon to represent a superhuman adversary, that would not show that the beast also signified such an adversary. Now all commentators allow that the seven-headed beast signified human adversaries; and why should they then contend that the dragon signified anything else? Do not their systems warp their judgments in this case? But let us pass now to another point. Is it not evident that the dragon of the 12th chapter and the dragon of the 20th chapter are the same thing? The Apocalypse has but one dragon. We esteem it as certain that the dragon represents the same powers, in whatever part of the Apocalypse we find him mentioned. It would be exceedingly unwise to suppose that the dragon of the 12th chapter signifies human adversaries, and the dragon of the 20th chapter something utterly different; and this too without the slightest intimation to that effect from the revelator. And yet there are commentators who consider the dragon of the 12th chapter as signifying human adversaries, and the dragon of the 20th as signifying the devil of the popular creeds. We call this a remarkable inconsistency. There is no truth more apparent upon the face of the Apocalypse, than that the dragon signifies the same power throughout that book. Prof. Stuart

is quite sure that the dragon signifies the *diabolos* of his own creed; and yet he says, in one place, that the dragon standing before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born, (xii. 4,) "reminds us of Herod's attempt to massacre the infant Saviour at Bethlehem." He here intimates that the dragon represented a human adversary; but he immediately atones for the admission by hinting that Herod "was moved to such a deed by the great adversary of Christianity." — (Hints on Prophecy, 2d ed., p. 119.) Bishop Newton supposed that the dragon of the 20th chapter signified the devil of the popular theology; but the dragon of the 12th chapter, in his view, signified the Roman Empire. "For that the Roman Empire was here figured, the characters and attributes of the dragon plainly evince;" — (Prophecies, p. 531;) and he goes on to show it in its particulars. It is a wonderful inconsistency to suppose that the dragon represented a human adversary in the one case, and in the other the devil of the popular theology. Sir Isaac Newton says: "The dragon signifies the same empire with Daniel's he-goat, in the reign of his last horn, that is, the whole Roman Empire." — (p. 315.) Mr. Lord says, in his recently published work on the Apocalypse, "that the great red dragon symbolizes the rulers of the Roman Empire;" — (p. 313, on xii. 1—6;) but when he comes to the 20th chapter, he tells us, that he is "the great fallen angel," "the great adversary of God and man who has seduced the nations." — (Exposition of the Apocalypse, by David N. Lord, 1847, p. 514.) Such a method of interpreting the Scriptures is against all proper rule. Adam Clarke, the Methodist commentator, explains the dragon xii. 3 to signify "not the Roman Empire in general, but the heathen Roman Empire;" and he is not very explicit in his notes on the 20th chap-

## 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up,

ter in regard to the devil, as if he was confident of the weight of the concession he had made in the words now quoted. But the editors of the Improved Version give a decidedly satisfactory note, on xx. 1—3: "The reader will remember that the whole of this is a visionary scene, which passed in the imagination of the writer; and by no means implies the real existence of any such monster or being as the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, which are only names to express and to personify the hostile, idolatrous and persecuting power."

It has been alleged that the dragon must represent the devil of the popular theology, because he is said to be "that old serpent," meaning the serpent that tempted Eve. But this is taking for granted that the serpent which tempted Eve meant a superhuman tempter. Has that point ever been proved? The old serpent that tempted Eve was a deceiver, and he is put metaphorically for the dragon, because the dragon was also a deceiver; he "deceived the whole world;" xii. 9. He is called the Devil, *diabolos*, as the accuser of the Christians, xii. 10, and Satan as their unrelenting adversary, for this is the proper signification of these terms. And if any reliance be placed on the fact of the dragon being called the old serpent, the Devil, and Satan, to prove that he is a superhuman adversary, let it be remembered, that he is designated by these terms as forcibly and directly in the 12th chapter as in the 20th. See xii. 9; xx. 2. In Isaiah xxvii. 1, a human adversary is represented by both the serpent and the dragon: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Perhaps the revelator had this passage in his mind. That the word devil stands for human adversaries,

see John vi. 70, where Jesus calls Judas a devil; and Rev. ii. 10, where it is said, "the devil shall cast some of you into prison." See the long note on that place. Jesus surely called Peter a satan, or adversary; Matt. xvi. 23. ¶ *Thousand years.*—This phrase we shall consider under the following verse.

3. *Cast him into the bottomless pit.*—The pit here is to be understood solely as a metaphor. The revelator wished to represent the restraining of the dragon, and of course he must provide, in his imagery, some means of confinement. This imaginary pit is therefore introduced, and the angel with its key and the chain. The scene is all laid on the earth. The prison and the pit are continually used as metaphors in the Bible. "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy name;" Ps. xlii. 7. What prison was this? We reply, it was a mere metaphor. See, also, the words of Isaiah: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house;" xlii. 6, 7. The prison here was merely a metaphor to represent the state in which the Gentiles lay before the deliverance wrought out by the gospel reached them. The same metaphor precisely is found lxi. 1: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." See, also, 1 Pet. iii. 19. The pit, in the 20th of Revelations, was no more a real pit, than the prison mentioned in these passages was a real prison. It was a metaphor merely. The sacred writers

and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no

frequently speak of a pit metaphorically. David says: "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings;" Psa. xl. 2; i. e., he delivered me from difficulty and danger, and set me in safety and prosperity. What can be more plain than the meaning in this case? "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit;" Prov. xxii. 14; xxiii. 27. The haughty king of Babylon, who had exalted himself to heaven, and set his throne above the stars of God, was brought down to the ground, "to the sides of the pit;" Isa. xiv. 12—15. It is certain, then, that the prophets were accustomed to speak of the pit as a mere metaphor for degradation and restraint; and this is precisely the sense the word is to bear in the case before us. The dragon had hitherto maintained dominion; but a power had now come by which he was to be overthrown. He was to be cast down and restrained; and this is all that is meant by his being cast into the bottomless pit and bound. When earthly powers have enjoyed a season of prosperity and triumph, they are said to have been "exalted unto heaven;" so, when a reverse takes place, they are said to be "thrust down to hell;" Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15. And what is meant by Capernaum being cast down to hell, but the reverse of being exalted to heaven? The exaltation was temporal prosperity, and the casting down was temporal degradation. So the casting of the dragon into the bottomless pit was throwing him down from power, and bringing him into the reverse state from that which he had previously maintained. ¶ *Shut him up, and set a seal upon him.* — Thus we see that the power of the dragon was effectually restrained by Christianity for a time. The door of a pit, den, prison, or sepulchre, was sometimes sealed to prevent deception. When once it was guarded in

this manner, it could not be opened without its being known to the officer, who had marked it with his own seal. Thus we read, Dan. vi. 17: "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." The Jews said to Pilate, "Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch;" Matt. xxvii. 64—66. ¶ *That he should deceive the nations no more.* — This seems to have been his principal employment. Heathenism was a deceit. The heathen teachers beguiled the people "through philosophy and vain deceit;" Col. ii. 8. In Paul's description of anti-Christ, he speaks of his coming as "after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;" 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. It is not a matter of wonder, then, that because of the dragon's confinement it is said, "he should deceive the nations no more." Stuart, the Professor at Andover, Mass., says, when treating on this subject, that the pit, or abyss, is not a place of endless punishment. "From the whole representation, here and else where, it is plain that the abyss is not the place of final punishment, but only of temporary restraint or chastisement." — (Com. on the place.) ¶ *The thousand years.* — There is some difficulty in determining what particular time is intended by the thousand years. The only aid furnished by the other sacred books in

more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after

that he must be loosed a little season.

coming to a right understanding of this matter is, they seem to show that the number, a thousand, was used proverbially for *many*. Hence we read of a thousand generations for *many* generations, and one chasing a thousand for chasing *many*. Again, God says, "The cattle on a thousand hills are mine," where no one will pretend that the exact number of a thousand is intended. We read also, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand," to which the same remark will apply. It will be remembered, that in determining what time was intended by the twelve hundred and sixty days, (Rev. xi. 3; xii. 6,) we maintained that all we could learn about it was, that it was the time of the church's depression and of the triumph of the Roman power. The thousand years, on the contrary, is the time of the church's prosperity, and of the dragon's restraint. It is not probable that the exact number, a thousand, was intended. The season described was what would appear to men to be a long time, although in the eye of God it might be a very short time, for a thousand years in his sight are but as yesterday; Psa. xc. 4. The two events which particularly distinguish the thousand years are the restraining of the dragon, and the spiritual reign of the Christians (of whom the martyrs were made the representatives) with Christ upon the earth; though it is not certain that the reign of the Christians was to close when the thousand years closed. Sir Isaac Newton supposed that what St. Peter said, about the thousand years, 2 Ep. ii. 4, he was led to say from what he had read in the Apocalypse; and he believed for this, and many other reasons, that the Apocalypse was written before that epistle. — (p. 243.) We apprehend that the revelator borrowed his idea of the *thousand years* from the Rabbins. Lightfoot says:

"The Jews counted the days of the Messias a thousand years. The Babylon Talmud doth show their full opinion about the days of the Messias; and amongst other things they say thus, as Aruch speaks their words: 'It is a tradition of the house of Elijah, that the righteous ones whom the blessed God shall raise from the dead, they shall no more return to the dust; but those thousand years that the holy blessed God is to renew the world, he will give them wings as eagles, and they shall flee upon the waters.' The place in the Talmud is in Sanhedrim, fol. 92, where the text indeed hath not the word *thousand*, but the marginal gloss bath it, and shows how to understand the 'thousand years.' And Aruch speaks it as a thing of undeniable knowledge and entertainment. And so speaks R. Eliezer, 'The days of the Messias are a thousand years.'" — (Lightfoot's Works, Pitman's ed., London, 1825, vol. iii., p. 361.) Observe the particulars of this tradition. During the thousand years, the righteous were to revive and fall no more; they were to mount up with wings as eagles and flee over the waters. Are not these the facts which the revelator incorporates into that section of the Apocalypse which we are now considering? Hence Lightfoot says: "John all along this book doth intimate new stories by remembering old ones; and useth *not only* the Old Testament phrase to express them by, but much allusion to custom, languages, and opinion of the Jews, that he might speak, as it were, closer to them and nearer their apprehensions,—so doth he here and forward." — (Idem, 361.) John uses the traditions of the Jews, in regard to the prosperity of the kingdom of the Messias, to describe the coming prosperity of the church during the dragon's restraint. He speaks of it as a thousand years not at all for the

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that

purpose of describing the length of it, but because such had been the Rabbinical expression. ¶ *After that he must be loosed a little.* — The dragon, or pagan power, was in the first place to be restrained ; after that it would be slightly revived ; but it would be finally overthrown throughout the empire ; ver. 10.

4. *I saw.* — Here the revelator begins a new subject. The previous verses refer to the restraint of the dragon ; — this verse refers to the martyrs as representatives of the faithful Christians, living and reigning with Christ. And here let it be observed, once for all, that this chapter is not to be regarded as a continuous narration in point of time. The revelator relates *parallel* occurrences, and not *consecutive* ones. From verses 1—3, he describes a certain series of events. At verse 4, he goes back to first events, and traces another series, which is continued to the end of the 10th verse. At verse 11, he goes back again to first events. At the first verse he says : “ I saw an angel,” &c. At verse 4, he goes back again to the same time, and commences in the same manner : “ I saw thrones,” &c. And at verse 11, we find him adopting anew the same form of speech, — “ I saw a great white throne.” These are not *consecutive* but *simultaneous* occurrences. ¶ *Thrones.* — What thrones were these the revelator saw ? A throne is a place of power. The “ great white throne,” mentioned verse 11, was the mediatorial throne. The faithful Christians (especially the martyrs, who surrendered up their lives for the truth, and who are therefore used as representatives of the faithful, who were ready to die for Christ) were to be honored by living and reigning with him upon the earth. This applies, let it be remembered, not only to the actual martyrs, but to all who loved the truth more than their

lives, — all the faithful and persevering, who had the spirits of the martyrs, and who had been redeemed by the blood of Christ, — these all lived and reigned with him on the earth. The thrones, therefore, were the symbols of the Christians reigning with Christ, coöperating with him, by their example and influence ; and this they did whether they had been slain or not ; for if they had been slain, they still lived among men by their examples. Paul so lives, and reigns with Christ, on the earth, even to this day ; and so do all the early Christians, and the faithful everywhere, the knowledge of whom has reached us. The revelator drew his metaphor from Daniel vii. 9, 10, and especially 22, 27. But more on this subject below. Let us proceed. See Rev. v. 9, 10 : “ For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign *on the earth*.” St. Paul said : “ It is a faithful saying : For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with him ;” 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. The revelator, of course, as was his custom, puts these things into a much more metaphorical form. He says : “ I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment [for the power of judging, or reigning] was given unto them.” This agrees precisely with what Jesus told his disciples before his death : “ Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” i. e., spiritual Israel ; Matt. xix. 28. It was in this way that the “ saints” were to “ judge the world ;” 1 Cor. vi. 2. Hence Jesus said to the church at Thyatira : “ And he that overcometh, and keepeth my

were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,

works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father ;" Rev. ii. 26, 27. And again, to the church at Laodicea : "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne;" iii. 21. The New Testament is full of these figures. The thrones which John saw were metaphorical, and so was the "great white throne," mentioned verse 11. The kingdom of Christ itself was not real and outward, but metaphorical and spiritual. ¶ *And I saw the souls of them, &c.* — We do not suppose that the revelator actually saw the souls, or spirits, of those who had been beheaded ; for a spirit cannot be seen. His meaning was, he saw that those who had been faithful amidst all the persecutions, and had suffered death for the cause of Christ, were still, in an important sense, here on the earth. He saw their spirits here, invigorating their successors ; he saw the influences of their lives ; he saw that these men, although absent in body, like their Master, (for he also had suffered martyrdom,) still remained on the earth, in precisely the same sense in which Jesus remained on the earth, although they were not so eminent as he ; and thus Jesus, (though absent,) and the martyrs who had been beheaded, *lived and reigned* on the earth. Christ lives and reigns on the earth now, and so do the martyrs, and every faithful Christian the knowledge of whom has reached us. How little is there of the good that can really die. Abel "being dead, yet speaketh;" Heb. xi. 4. The poet has forcibly expressed this idea on a slightly different subject :

"They never fail, who *die*  
in a great cause; the block may soak their  
gore;

Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs  
Be strung to city gates, and castle walls;  
*But still their spirit walks abroad.* Though  
years

Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,  
They but augment the deep and swelling  
thoughts

Which overpower all others, and conduct  
The world, at last, to Freedom."

Why should we be surprised, then, to hear John say, "I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus?" This was his style. It was poetical. It is not wise to find fault with the style, but to endeavor to appreciate and to understand it. When it was thought by some, that the murderous spirit of the Jews, in destroying the early Christians, remained too long unpunished, the revelator referred to the complaint in the following manner: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled;" vi. 9—11. Such was the revelator's style. It was a bold prosopopeia, as when we read of the blood of Abel crying unto God from the ground; Gen. iv. 10. ¶ *They lived and reigned with Christ.* — And where does he reign? We read, Rev. v. 10, — "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign *on the earth.*" Does Jesus reign on the earth? Evidently. "For judgment I am come *into this world*;" John ix. 39. With a few additional hints we think the reader will be fully able to understand this verse. Observe, 1st. There were two classes spoken of as living and reigning with Christ, — to wit, the Christians who had not

and which had not worshipped | the beast. neither his image,

yet passed away from the earth ; and the martyrs. The revelator refers to the first class in the following words : "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment (or the power to reign) was given unto them." These were the Christians who had not suffered death. They reigned with Christ *on the earth* ; for, although Christ had suffered death, he still remained, by his spirit, on the earth ; he reigned here in the gospel kingdom, and the Christians reigned with him, as mentioned Matt. xix. 28, and Rev. v. 10. The other class who lived and reigned with Christ were the martyrs, who had been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus." But they did not reign personally. The revelator does not contemplate them as reigning personally. He does not speak of the form of their existence in the same manner in which he spoke of that of the others. Of the first he says, "I saw thrones, and they sat on them," as if speaking of persons on the earth ; but of the other class he says, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," as if they were not present in body, but in spirit. 2d. Let it be remembered, that Christ continued to reign on the earth, after his crucifixion, and after his ascension. He was not present in body, but in spirit ; and that is the same sense in which those who had been beheaded for bearing testimony of him were present. Jesus had all power in heaven and earth ; and he promised his disciples that he would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world ; Matt. xxviii. 18—20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ;" Matt. xviii. 20 ; not surely in body, but in spirit. It is by the power of his spirit and his truth that he now reigns in the church on earth ; for "he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet ;" 1 Cor. xv. 25. In the same sense in which *he*

reigns, all faithful Christians reign, whether living or dead ; only he reigns preëminently, like the shining of the sun ; and they secondarily, like the shining of the moon and planets. Christians who are now present on the earth do not reign by means of their bodies, but their spirits ; and in the same way Jesus and all the faithful army of Christians reign together. Take, for instance, Paul and John — or Clemens of Rome, or Polycarp, or Irenæus, or Clemens of Alexandria, or Origen — do not these now all reign in the church ? Do they not exercise an influence over all the earth ? No one will deny it. For, although not present in body, they live and reign on the earth with Jesus, who is not present in body any more than they. 3d. Observe that it is no new reign of Jesus which is mentioned in the passage before us. There is but one reign of Christ, and that is the gospel reign, so to speak. What other reign of Christ is ever mentioned in the Bible ? And this reign goes on, wherever or whenever the influence of the gospel is felt. When it is said of any, therefore, that they reign with Christ, it is because they are co-workers or co-sufferers with him ; for, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him ;" 2 Tim. ii. 12. The beheaded martyrs lived on the earth by their spirits, and participated in the reign of Christ. Their spirits were seen in their successors. The revelator did not intend that they were raised from the dead bodily, and lived on the earth again in that form ; for the resurrection from the dead, in the literal sense, is never described in such terms as he here employs. 4th. The reign of Jesus was the same thing, substantially, as the binding of Satan. The triumph of the gospel brought down the powers of heathenism ; the descent of the New Jerusalem crushed pagan Rome ; the reign of Jesus overthrew the reign of idols, of oppression, of deception, and of sin.

neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and

reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead

We may learn what was the reign of Jesus, and the reign of his faithful servants, dead and living, by considering it as the opposite of the reign of the dragon. Hence, when the angel came down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a season, then the reign of Christ prospered in the empire. Afterward, the dragon should be loosed a little season, and the power of the gospel should decline; but still, subsequently, and at no very distant day from that of the revelator, the dragon would be utterly destroyed throughout the empire; xx. 10; and then the gospel reign would go on in great glory; 11; the nations would be judged by Christ's truth; 12, 13; death and hell, and all the power of the enemies of the gospel, would be put down; 14, 15; and the holy city, New Jerusalem, or the kingdom of God, would come with power throughout the empire, as it had in Judea, at the overthrow of the city of Zion. [Those who wish to see the following phraseology explained, "Worshipped the beast; neither his image; neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," are referred to pp. 157—159, 216, 218, 227, 232, 233, 260, 287, of this Commentary.]

¶ *A thousand years.*—See our remarks on this phrase, under verse 3. The time is not to be understood strictly. It was called a "thousand years" from a tradition that had existed among the Jews. See the quotation from Lightfoot under 3. It was the time of the dragon's restraint, and of the triumph of Christianity. Adam Clarke says, "It is not likely that the number a thousand years is to be taken literally here." And again, he adds, "The phraseology of the Apocalypse seems partly taken

from the ancient prophets, and partly Rabbinical, and it is from the Jewish use of those terms that we are to look for their interpretation."—(Com. on xx. 2.)

5. *Rest of the dead.*—It is evident, from these words, that the revelator had been speaking of *the dead*; and also of one section of the dead in contradistinction from the rest of them. He now wished to speak of the rest. What dead had he spoken of? Look back into the 4th verse. "I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, \* \* \* they *lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This was one part of the dead; and they lived and reigned with Christ during the blessed state of the church called the thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live until the time denoted by the thousand years was finished. To find the previous mention of these, we must look back to the last verse of the preceding chapter, "And the remnant [for rest, *οἱ λοιποὶ*, the same phrase as in the verse before us] were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh;" xix. 21. This was the rest of the dead. They had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image; xix. 20; but the other section of the dead had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark; xx. 4. The latter section lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the others, viz., the worshippers of the beast, "the remnant," or "the rest," lived not until the thousand years were finished. Thus we have seen that the first section of the dead, whom the revelator had named, were the martyrs—those who manifested such constancy and faith, and willingness to suffer in the cause of Christ, that it appeared to

lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he

the revelator's vivid imagination as though the martyrs were on the earth again — *these* were the first section of the dead. The "rest of the dead," xix. 21, were of that class who had not, up to that time, been delivered from the dominion of the dragon. They were of the class who worshipped the beast and received his mark. Persons of this class, in the view of the revelator, would not be brought into the kingdom of Christ, until after the thousand years, when the dragon, released for a little season, would make his last efforts, and be entirely overthrown, to recover no more forever and ever. ¶ *This is the first resurrection.* — What is? Ans. The living and reigning with Christ during the thousand years. What else is there in the context for the pronoun *this* to refer to? "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This [i. e., the living and reigning] is the first resurrection." The first resurrection, then, answers to the first fruits. We have now, we believe, brought out the sense of this verse. The dead were divided, in the mind of the revelator, into two classes; 1st, those who were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse; xix. 21; and, 2d, those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus; xx. 4. They were all contemplated by the revelator as dead. The latter class, who had obtained the victory over the beast, and over his image, were raised from the dead figuratively, and lived in their successors, and reigned with Christ. This spiritual resurrection was the first resurrection.

6. *First resurrection.* — We have shown what was meant by the first resurrection — it was an early conversion to Christianity — a living and

that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of

reigning with Christ during the thousand years. Blessed and holy was he who had part in the first resurrection. Why? Because on such the second death had no power; but on the contrary, they should be "priests of God and of Christ, and should reign with him a thousand years." ¶ *Second death.* — Now, the second death, it will be seen, was the state that was in opposition to the living and reigning with Christ the thousand years. The first resurrection was the being raised to live and reign with Christ. As this was a resurrection, there must have been a previous state of death, which we may call the first death. Hence, then, the first death was a death in sin; and it was by sin that death *first* entered into the world. Now, the second death was, continuing to remain in that state of death, after the first resurrection had taken place, as darkness appears to be the more profound when brought into contrast with light. It may signify, too, being plunged more deeply into that state of death, for the gospel was to some "the savor of death unto death;" 2 Cor. ii. 16; and so some who heard the voice of Christ, and were roused by it from their state of apathy, were not truly converted thereby, but came forth to "the resurrection of damnation;" John v. 29; viz., a greater damnation than they had suffered before. And Christ threatened such that they should receive "the greater damnation;" Matt. xxiii. 14. The second death may also signify the falling away of some who once embraced the truth, and returned, like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire; 2 Peter ii. 22. The animal thus became a second time unclean. To this view of the subject, the phrase "*second death*" seems peculiarly applicable. But, in opposition to this, it may be

Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand

years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

8 And shall go out to deceive

said, that on those who have participated in the first resurrection, the second death hath no power. This is certainly not meant to include every individual who had participated in the first resurrection, for some of them did fall away, and were involved in all the judgments that came upon the enemies of the church. As a general rule it was true, that the second death had no power on such as had participated in the first resurrection. They were priests of God and of Christ, and reigned with him; still there were exceptions. But for further remarks on the second death, see ver. 14.

7. *Thousand years are expired.*—The thousand years denoted the time of the dragon's restraint and of the uninterrupted prosperity of the church. We do not pretend to define the exact limit of it. We have shown, in another place, that the word thousand is proverbially used in the Bible for many; but we are not sure this is the precise sense the phrase ought to bear in the Apocalypse. There was a tradition among the Jews, that the kingdom of the Messias would have a period of exceeding glory, which they called a thousand years. The term, therefore, came into the Apocalypse proverbially; and must be so understood. The great fact taught by the revelator was, that the dragon was to be restrained for a season. His power had been great, and he had made full use of it to persecute the church. Many of the Christians had suffered death; "they loved not their lives even unto the death;" xii. 11. The dragon raged the more because he knew his time was short; xii. 12; and he made war, cruel war, against the church; xii. 17. But he was to be restrained; and while he was restrained, the church would progress again; and men, just like

the martyrs who had been slain, would rise up to reign with Christ, so that it would seem almost as though the martyrs were on the earth again. Such were the things that were to transpire during the time of the dragon's restraint, called the thousand years. St. Peter states, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" 2 Epis. iii. 8. He was warning his brethren not to suppose that the Lord delayed his coming. He assured them the Lord was not slack concerning his promise; and then, as though he feared they would put the second coming of Christ far away, on account of what they had heard or read about a thousand years, he seems to have intimated that this is not to be understood strictly; for he says, with the Lord one day may be reckoned as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. We offer this as a mere suggestion.

¶ *Shall be loosed out of his prison.*—When the temporary prosperity of the church expired, Satan should be loosed out of his prison, but not for a long time. "He must be loosed a little season;" ver. 3. That all these things have reference to the events of this world, is made fully evident from the contents of the succeeding verse.

8. *Nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.*—It seems, then, that this scene is laid on the earth. The nations "are in the four quarters of the earth," and are called Gog and Magog; and the Devil, or Satan, or the dragon, (for we have shown that all these terms signify the same thing,) went out to deceive them, and to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. ¶ *Gog and Magog.*—Who are intended by these mysterious terms? They were originally the

the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

proper names of persons. Gog was one of the sons of Joel; 1 Chron. v. 4; and Magog was one of the sons of Japheth; Gen. x. 2. But Ezekiel seems to use these terms to signify the very numerous armies that made war against the children of Israel. See his prophecy, chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. We interpret these terms on the same principles we applied to the term Armageddon. That was used metaphorically for a place of great slaughter, on account of certain circumstances in its early history. So Gog and Magog, being terms applied by Ezekiel to the very numerous enemies of the house of Israel, are here used metaphorically to signify the very numerous enemies that the dragon, the leading powers of heathenism, brought against the church of Christ. The battle of Gog and Magog against the church is to be understood in a similar sense with the battle of the forces of the dragon against Christianity, mentioned in former parts of the Apocalypse. See xvi. 14, where we are told that the kings of the earth and the whole world are gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It was a spiritual contest, for which war, in the usual sense, often stands as a metaphor. ¶ *As the sand of the sea.*—The terms Gog and Magog convey two distinct ideas, viz., 1st, that of enemies; and 2d, an immense number of them; and hence it is said in the verse before us, "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Gog and Magog certainly stand in the verse before us, for the nations who were in the four quarters of the earth, the number of whom was immense, and who made war on

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

the church. See Ezek. xxxviii. 9. 14—16.

9. *Compassed the camp.*—They spread themselves widely; they surrounded the camp of the saints. This is highly metaphorical. The opposition of heathenism to Christianity is represented under the metaphor of the siege of a city. The city was the beloved city, the new Jerusalem. What other city can we call the camp of the saints? But the enemies could not succeed against it. ¶ *Fire came down from God out of heaven.*—God suddenly discomfited them, which is represented by fire coming down out of heaven to destroy them. This metaphor of fire coming down from heaven was employed, because God had, in olden time, employed such means to overthrow wicked men and cities. He rained fire and hail upon the land of Egypt; Gen. ix. 23; Ps. cv. 32. So he destroyed Nadab and Abihu; Lev. x. 2. The prophets of Baal were discomfited by fire from the Lord out of heaven; 1 Kings xviii. 38. At the call of Elijah, fire came down from heaven, and consumed those who were sent to take him; 2 Kings i. 10, 12. These facts were well remembered by the Jews. When Jesus sent his disciples to the Samaritan village, and they became incensed against the inhabitants, they said: "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" Luke ix. 54; for which their Lord rebuked them. Fire from God out of heaven became a metaphor for sudden destruction or overthrow. The revelator continually borrowed his images from the Old Testament, and from the sacred his

## 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the

tory and traditions of the Jews; as Lightfoot says, (when speaking of Gog and Magog,) "From old stories and copies of great troubles, John transcribeth new, using known terms from Scripture, and from the Jews language and notions, that he might the better be understood." — (Works, iii. 365.) And let it be here remarked, that they would much more readily understand the revelator's style than we should.

10. *And the devil.* — The devil here does not intend any fallen angelic being, or any different order from that of the human race. We have shown conclusively, that "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," signified the heathen enemies of Christianity; and it cannot be denied, that all those terms signify the same thing. The devil, therefore, signifies the human enemies of Christianity, as we have shown in another case, under Rev. ii. 10. It is supposed, by some interpreters, that the devil here must signify the angelic apostate of the popular theology, because the word stands alone — *HO DIABOLOS*. Even as sound an interpreter as Dr. Campbell intimates, that where *ho diabolos* occurs, the devil of the dominant creeds, the fallen-angelic spirit, is intended. This statement, however, is not to be relied on; for in ii. 10 we read: "The devil shall cast some of you into prison," where clearly the human adversaries of Christianity are referred to, and yet the Greek phrase is *HO DIABOLOS*. The devil in the verse we are considering is the same power mentioned in ver. 2, and there called "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan." These names all represent the same power. The being by which that power was represented appears first in xii. 3, 4, 7, 9; he was cast down from the sky, where he was seen to have a battle with Michael, a metaphorical representation of the contest between the

heathen and Christian powers; 8. 9; he was the figure of the persecuting power; 13, 17; his associates, the beast and the false prophet, were cast into the lake of fire; xix. 20; the dragon, or devil, was seized and bound for a season; xx. 1—3; when this season had expired, he was let out of his prison; ver. 7; he began again to deceive the nations, and stirred up Gog and Magog to battle against the saints; and lastly and principally he, — "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," — was seized and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Now it would at once be obvious to all men, were it not for the blinding influence of their creeds, that it is the same power which is mentioned in all the places here referred to. The Apocalypse has but one dragon. If the dragon mentioned in chap. xii., with seven heads and ten horns, represented the Roman heathen persecuting power, so does it represent the same thing, and nothing else, in the case before us. Those, therefore, who interpret it to signify a fallen-angelic being, engraft the fancies and traditions of men upon the word of God, — a practice that has been too long followed, and that we ought by all means to resist. In our note on xii. 9, we have showed at length, that the dragon is certainly used in no place, in all the Bible, as a metaphor for any enemies but human enemies; and if it signify anything else in the Apocalypse, it is a departure from the otherwise universal scriptural use. Let those who maintain that the dragon of the Apocalypse signifies a superhuman adversary, point us to a single passage, in any other part of the Bible, where they can even set up a pretence that any other than a human adversary is intended. We refer also to our note on xx. 2. ¶ *That deceived them.* — The power represented by the dragon, or devil, was indeed a deceiver, and for this

lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet

reason it was called "the old serpent," as it was the serpent that was employed as a metaphor of the power that deceived Eve. The dragon deceived the whole world; xii. 9; xx. 8. The beast also, and the false prophet, were great deceivers; xiii. 14; xviii. 23; xix. 20; xx. 3, 8.

¶ *Was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.* — First of all, let the reader not fail to turn to the notes on xiv. 10, and xix. 20, and read what is there written. We have treated of the origin of this metaphor in the remarks on the passages last mentioned. It was drawn from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was used by the sacred writers to signify a thorough and irreparable destruction. The heathen leaders were to be utterly overthrown and destroyed. Many have supposed that the lake of fire and brimstone denoted a place of endless punishment in the future state. But there is an entire absence of proof of such a position. It is clearly an assumption, without the slightest evidence. Here we find an account of a contest between the heathen powers on the one side, and Christianity on the other. It was carried on upon the earth. The metaphors all show this. The devil is not said to be slain; but like the beast and the false prophet, xix. 20, he is cast *alive* into the lake of fire and brimstone. Now, we ask, under this view of the subject, how can it be made to appear congruous with the plan of the chapter, to suppose that what was intended by the metaphor of the lake of fire is not upon the earth? The beast and the false prophet had been previously cast into this lake of fire i. e., they had been previously crushed and punished. The dragon himself is now to be effectually put down to rise no more, throughout the empire; and it is metaphorically represented by his being cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. Heathenism is as effect-

ually destroyed from that part of the world which formed the Roman Empire as Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing remains of it but the smoke of its ruins. Were not Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven? Have we not shown that fire is one of the most common figures which the sacred writers employ to represent the judgments of God in this life? Nothing is susceptible of clearer proof than this. See Ps. lxvi. 12; lxxxiii. 14; xcvii. 3; Isaiah ix. 19; xlv. 15, 16; Jer. iv. 4; xxi. 12; xlviii. 45; Lam. ii. 3, 4; Ezk. xxi. 31; xxii. 18—22, and a host of others, that we have not room to quote.

But it is supposed, by many, that punishment by *fire and brimstone* must surely belong to the future state. Let such examine the following passages, and they will see that "fire and brimstone" are terms frequently employed to describe the judgments of God in this present life: Gen. xix. 24; Deut. xxix. 23; Job xviii. 15; Ps. xi. 6; Isaiah xxx. 33; xxxiv. 9, 10; Ezk. xxxviii. 22; Luke xvii. 29. ¶ *Where the beast and false prophet are.* — We have already shown that they were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. See our remarks on xix. 20. ¶ *Tormented day and night.* — Where, in all the Bible, are these terms to be found applied to the future state? We are told by Moses: "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease;" Gen. viii. 22. But we could not expect the continuance of day and night should the earth cease to remain. And as the punishment of the devil, or dragon, in the lake of fire and brimstone, is to continue day and night, it must be on the earth, where day and night interchange. The heathen power was to be totally put down, and destroyed. By day or by night it was the same; it should rise

are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

no more. ¶ *Forever and ever*.—We have largely considered this phrase in our note on xiv. 11. See, also, xix. 3. As much stress is laid on these words, we offer the following additional observations, which we are sensible involve some of the facts before stated. The words, *forever and ever*, of themselves, furnish no proof of strictly endless duration; they are, in the Scriptures, applied again and again to temporal things. We will adduce a few passages. “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book; that it may be for the time to come, forever and ever;” Isa. xxx. 8. The destruction of Idumea is thus described: “It is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up *forever*; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it *forever and ever*.” Isa. xxxiv. 8—10. There can be no doubt that the punishments here described were temporal punishments; and yet they are described in almost the precise terms that occur in the case before us. Let the reader also consult Jer. vii. 1—7. The 7th verse is, “Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, *forever and ever*.” See, also, Jeremiah xxv. 5: “Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you, and to your fathers, *forever and ever*.” This being the last time, in the course of our Commentary, that we shall be called on to notice these terms as applied to the duration of punishment, we give, in conclusion, the following authorities and facts. Prof. Stuart says, “The word translated *everlasting* is sometimes applied (as in common

life) to things which endure for a long time, for an indefinite period. So it is applied to the Jewish priesthood; to the Mosaic ordinances; to the possession of the land of Canaan; to the hills and mountains; to the earth; to the time of service to be rendered by a slave; and to some other things of a like nature.”—(*Exeget. Essays*. Andover, 1830, p. 50.) Professor Robinson, of the Andover Institution, said, in his edition of Calmet, on the words “Eternal, Eternity: These words often signify a very long time, and therefore must not always be understood literally; so we find ‘eternal mountains,’ to denote their antiquity; Gen. xlix. 26; Deut. xxxiii. 15. God promises to David an eternal kingdom and posterity; that is, his and his son’s empire would be of long duration.”—(*Robinson’s Calmet*. Boston, 1832: p. 397.) “The words *eternal, everlasting, forever*, [says Cruden.] are sometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly; for example, it is said, Gen. xvii. 8: ‘I will give to thee, and to thy seed, the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.’ And in chap. xiii. 15: ‘I will give it to thee and to thy seed forever;’ that is, for a long space of time. And in Gen. xlix. 36, we find *everlasting hills*, so called to denote their antiquity, stability and duration; and this expression is used to show the long continuance and durableness of Joseph’s blessing. God promises a throne to David, an eternal kingdom, a posterity that will never be extinguished; that is, that his and his son’s empire will be of very long duration; 2 Sam. vii. 16; 1 Chron. xvii. 14. Thus, *thou shalt be our guide from this time forth, even forever*, that is, during our whole life. And in many other places of Scripture, and in particular where the word *forever* is applied to the Jewish rites and privileges, it commonly signifies no more than during the standing of that common-

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,

wealth, or until the coming of the Messiah." — (See his Concordance on the word *Eternal*.) Hear the learned Whitby, also, on this point: "Nor is there anything more common and familiar in Scripture, than to represent a thorough and irreparable destruction, whose effects and signs shall be still remaining, by the word *aiônios*, which we render *eternal*; \* \* \* and this specially is threatened where the destruction of a nation or people is likened to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah." — (Com. on Jude 7.) Observe, that there is nothing more common than to find the word *eternal*, and the concomitant expressions, used in a limited sense; and this is true particularly where the *punishment is likened to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah*. We close with the following quotations, which we find in a note on the passage before us, in the Improved Version: "*Forever and ever*; Greek, *ages of ages*. This text has also been alleged, but with little reason, in favor of what has justly been called, the *heart-withering* doctrine of eternal torments. See ch. xiv. 11, and the note there. The persons who are here said to be tormented forever and ever, are not real, but figurative and symbolical persons, the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. The place, therefore, the kind, and the duration of their torment, must also be figurative. The meaning seems to be, that all the corruptions of the Christian religion, as well as all heathen idolatry, and the spirit of persecution, shall be totally and forever exterminated; and pure and undefiled Christianity, in its spirit and in its power, shall everywhere prevail, and produce universal peace, and harmony, and happiness. This is the true advent of Christ; and to the promise of his speedy appearance for these glorious purposes, what benevolent heart can refuse to adopt the response of the prophet, — Amen, Come, Lord Jesus!" (Ch. xxii. 20.)

We shall now bring forward several passages of Scripture to prove what we allege, and what these critics have conceded, viz., that the words are used in a limited sense. And, 1. EVER. — Lev. vi. 13: "The fire shall *ever* be burning on the altar." John xviii. 20: "I *ever* taught in the synagogue and temple." 2. FOREVER. — Gen. xiii. 15: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *forever*." Exod. xii. 14: "You shall keep it (the passover) a feast by an ordinance *forever*." Lev. xxv. 46: "They shall be your bondmen *forever*;" spoken of the Jewish slaves. Jonah declares, when swallowed by the fish, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth, with her bars, was about me *forever*; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God;" Jonah ii. 6. Here *forever* signified the time of Jonah's remaining in the fish's belly. Philemon 15: "That thou shouldst receive him (Onesimus) *forever*." 3. EVERLASTING. — Gen. xvii. 8; xlviii. 4: "I will give thee the land of Canaan for an *everlasting* possession." Gen. xlix. 26: "The utmost bound of the *everlasting* hills." Exod. xl. 15; Num. xxv. 13: "An *everlasting* priesthood." Lev. xvi. 34: "An *everlasting* statute." Hab. iii. 6: "The *everlasting* mountains were scattered." Now, as it regards these words, it makes no difference how often they are used in an unlimited sense, though they are used much less frequently in that sense than is generally supposed. If they are sometimes used in a limited sense, it is enough for our argument; it shows that the mere force of the word cannot be depended upon to prove the endless duration of punishment. We have now closed up all that is to be said of "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," the metaphor of the heathen persecuting power, of whom we shall hear no more in the Apocalypse.

from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there

These four terms signify the same power, in the third section of that book, whether used separately or conjointly. If, after all, any persons think that the fallen angelic *diabolos* is intended, let them remember that he is cast into the lake of fire, and is as utterly destroyed as were Sodom and Gomorrah, or the power of heathenism in that part of the world formerly embraced in the Roman empire.

#### FOURTH DIVISION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

*Preliminary Observations.* — We have now come to what we call the *fourth* great division of the Apocalypse. These divisions are made with reference to what we regard as the true sense of the book.

1. The first division, extending to the end of the third chapter, embraces the revelator's introduction, and his epistles to the seven churches of Asia.

2. The second, extending from the commencement of the fourth chapter to the end of the eleventh, describes the tumults and trials of the Jews, and the downfall of Judaism.

3. The third, extending from the commencement of the twelfth chapter to the end of the tenth verse of the twentieth chapter, sets forth the opposition of heathenism to Christianity, and its final overthrow. It is unfortunate that a division of the chapters was not made at this place.

4. The fourth division treats of Christ ascending the mediatorial throne, and of the introduction and final prevalence of the Gospel in the world. Of course, it is the latter subject we are now to take up.

11. *I saw a great white throne.* — Having exhorted the churches to constancy and faithfulness, by showing the downfall both of Judaism and heathenism, the revelator comes now still further to confirm them, by showing the spread and triumph of the Gospel. He goes back in his reflections to the establishment of the mediatorial kingdom. "I saw a great

white throne." The gospel shall triumph; Jesus was appointed to reign over the nations. By this "great white throne" is unquestionably intended the mediatorial throne. It is not a real, but an ideal throne, like the "thrones" mentioned in the 4th verse, and like the "holy city New Jerusalem" coming down from God out of heaven. This city had "a wall great and high," and "twelve gates," and at the gates twelve angels; and the length and the breadth of it were equal, each twelve thousand furlongs; xxi. 12—16. Does any one suppose that *this* is to be understood in the literal sense? Does any one suppose that *such* a city actually descended from God out of heaven? It was not a real, but an imaginary city. The ancient Jerusalem being very beautiful in the eyes of the Jews, and being associated with all that was holy in the Jewish religion, the Jewish Christians represented the descent of the Gospel as the descent of another Jerusalem, a *new* Jerusalem, more beautiful than the former. So, in the ideal which the ancient Jews had of the dwelling-place of God, they pictured the Holy One as sitting on a throne. In their first conceptions, these views were indistinct and shadowy, like a vision. See the following passages: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it;" Ezk. i. 26. Again: "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire-stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne;" Ezk. x. 1. When, therefore, the Lord Jesus was appointed to *reign* as the spiritual ruler among the nations, nothing was more natural than to represent him as sitting on a throne. It is a very appropriate and

was found no place for them.

beautiful metaphor. As in the ancient city of Jerusalem, "there were set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David;" *Psa. cxxii. 5*; so in the holy city New Jerusalem, there are also "thrones of judgment." The principal one is the "great white throne" of the Mediator. The throne denotes the power of the Lord Jesus to reign. It is said to be great because "all power in heaven and on earth was given to him;" *Matt. xxviii. 18*; and it is said to be *white* to show its spotless purity and justice. ¶ *And him that sat on it.* — This was the Son of man. See *Matt. xxv. 31*; *Dan. vii. 13, 14*. It is here very proper to inquire, *when* did the Son of man assume this throne? We answer, it was when he commenced to reign as King in Zion, or as Mediator. His course as Mediator and Saviour is compared to a reign which is to continue until all enemies are subdued unto him; *1 Cor. xv. 25—28*. But when did this reign begin? We reply, it begun when the *kingdom* of God came *with power* at the destruction of the Jewish state. Jesus refers to this in the following words: "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, *when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory*, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" *Matt. xix. 28*. But we still press the question, *when* did this reign begin? Observe the following words of Christ: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, *THEN* shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;" *Matt. xxv. 31*. When did the Son of man come in his glory? This is a question very easily answered. Our Lord himself has answered it: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not *taste of death*, till they see the

12 And I saw the dead

*Son of man coming in his kingdom;*" *Matt. xvi. 27, 28*. Here the Saviour explicitly states, that there were some standing before him, and listening to his words, who should not die before his coming in his glory should take place. The reader who wishes to be very critical may also consult *Matt. viii. 38*; *ix. 1*; *Luke ix. 26, 27*. We esteem it, then, to be fully settled, that "the great white throne" was set up at the time the kingdom of God came with power at the destruction of the Jewish state, and when Jesus commenced to reign in the gospel. ¶ *From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.* — The objector may think this fatal to our views, because the earth and heaven remain to our time, and have not fled away. But, in fact, the very circumstance that heaven and earth were said to flee away at the commencement of the Messiah's reign is a confirmation of our opinion, for the earth and heaven *did* flee away at the time of the destruction of the Jewish state, and of the permanent establishment of the gospel, in the sense intended by the revelator. And this fact we now proceed to prove. Nothing is more certain than that it was the custom of the Jewish prophets to represent political commotions, the rise and fall of rulers, cities, and bodies politic and sacred, under the figure of commotions in the heavenly bodies. We might give a multitude of learned authorities in confirmation of this point, but we content ourselves with one only, viz., that celebrated Orthodox divine, and truly learned man in all Biblical knowledge, Dr. Lightfoot. He said: "The destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish state is described as if the whole frame of this world were to be dissolved. Nor is it strange, when God destroyed his habitation and city, places once so dear to him, with so direful and sad an overthrow; his own people, whom he accounted of as much or more

small and great, stand before God; and the books were

than the whole world beside, by so dreadful and amazing plagues. (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30,) 'The sun shall be darkened,' &c. 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man,' &c.; which yet are said to fall out within that generation; (ver. 34; 2 Peter iii. 10.) 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,' &c. Compare with this, Deut. xxxii. 22; Heb. xii. 26; and observe that by *elements* are understood the Mosaic elements, (Gal. iv. 9; Col. ii. 20,) and you will not doubt that St. Peter speaks only of the conflagration of Jerusalem, the destruction of the nation, and the abolishing the dispensation of Moses. Rev. vi. 12, 13: 'The sun became black as sackcloth of hair,' &c., 'and the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together,' &c. Where, if we take notice of the foregoing plagues, by which, according to the most frequent threatenings, he destroyed that people, viz., the sword, (ver. 4,)—famine, (vers. 5, 6,)—and the plague, (ver. 8;)—withal comparing those words, 'They say to the mountains, Fall on us, and cover us,' with Luke xxiii. 30;—it will sufficiently appear that by those phrases is understood the dreadful judgment and overthrow of that nation and city. With these also agrees that of Jer. iv., from ver. 22 to 28, and clearly enough explains this phrase. To this appertain those and other such expressions as we meet with; (1 Cor. x. 11.) 'On us the ends of the world are come;' and (1 Peter iv. 7) 'The end of all things is at hand.'—(See Lightfoot's Works, Pitman's Edition: London, 1825: iii. 184, 314, 315, 320, 327; vi. 293; xi. 303, 304, 404.)

In addition, examine Isa. xiii. 13; xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 4; Ezk. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 30, 31; compare Acts ii. 16—21; Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24—26; Luke xxi. 25; 2 Peter iii. 10—12. We repeat, nothing is more

certain than that it was the custom of the Jewish prophets to represent political commotions and great changes in rulers, states and systems, by the metaphor of changes in the heavenly bodies. And we may add, such was also the custom of the New Testament writers, borrowed from the ancient prophets, as the passages quoted above from that work clearly show. When, therefore, it is said that the earth and heaven fled away at the time of the establishment of "the great white throne," the meaning is, that the nations were moved; the Jewish people, as a body politic, entirely passed away; the Mosaic religion was superseded, and fled into oblivion, before the coming of the gospel. And we shall find, when we come to the commencement of the 21st chapter, that the introduction of the gospel is described as the appearance of "a *new* heaven and *new* earth." If the new heaven and new earth represent the new gospel kingdom, the passing away of the old heaven and earth represented the passing away of the former dispensation. ¶ *There was found no place for them.*—And why not? The language here has an allusion to the metaphor of the prophet Daniel: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that *no place was found for them*: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth;" ii. 35. That image represented the Roman kingdom in the time when (Dan. ii. 44) the kingdom of God was set up. The latter, or heavenly kingdom, not formed by human aid, was represented by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, (Dan. ii. 34,) which ultimately "became a great mountain, and filled *the whole earth*." If it filled the whole earth, no place could possibly be

opened : and another book was opened, which is the book

found for any contrary system. We do not desire to interpret these things too strictly, nor to make too much of what may appear to some a minor circumstance ; but we have no doubt the revelator had his mental eye on this metaphor of Daniel. Observe again Daniel's words : "The wind carried them [i. e., the broken elements of the earthly kingdoms] away, that *no place was found for them* ; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and *filled the whole earth*." The revelator's language, then, is very appropriate, under our view of the subject. He was describing the ascent of Jesus to the mediatorial throne, on which he was to reign until all opposing systems passed away, and the gospel filled the whole earth. How appropriate then to say, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them ;" ver. 11.

12. *And I saw the dead.*—These were the persons to whom the gospel was to be preached, and who were to be judged, and ruled, and governed by it. The dead are those who were buried in ignorance of God ; who knew not his law ; who obeyed him not, and were therefore represented as dead, until they believed the gospel. We have found this judgment of the "dead, small and great," mentioned once before in the Apocalypse, viz., xi. 18, in connection with the closing up of Judaism and the opening of the gospel reign ; and there the revelator stated, "Thy wrath is come, and the time of THE DEAD that they should be judged," &c. See the long note on that verse. This preaching the gospel to the dead, and judging them thereby, is mentioned in other parts of the New Testament. In fact, the living and the dead are both judged by the gospel. This is the meaning of Peter's language, 1 Epis. iv. 5, 6 : "Who shall give account to

him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." That by the dead here is not meant those who had passed out of the present into the immortal state, but the dead in ignorance and sin, is acknowledged by commentators of different sects, some of whom are of very high standing. Adam Clarke says, on 1 Peter iv. 5 : "To judge the quick and the dead signifies, they shall give account of these irregularities to him who is prepared to judge both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles, previously to the preaching of the gospel among them, were reckoned to be dead in trespasses and sins ; Eph. ii. 1—5 ; under the sentence of death because they had sinned. The Jews had, at least by their religious profession, a name to live ; and by that profession, were bound to live to God."—(Com. on the place.) In addition to the opinion of Dr. Clarke, we give the following from Dr. Macknight : "*To judge the living and the dead.*—From the following verse it appears, that by *the dead* the apostle meant the Gentiles, said in other passages to be *dead* through ignorance and sin. Consequently, by *the living* we are to understand those who, by their profession in the gospel, are reputed to be alive ; Rev. iii. 1. *Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* See, also, 1 Tim. v. 6. The living and the dead, therefore, are the Jews and Gentiles." See Macknight on the Epistles. Dr. Whitby, in his very valuable Commentary on the New Testament, speaks of this passage as follows :—"The dead, in Scripture, doth often signify, not those who in a natural sense are dead by dissolution of the soul and body, but those who are spiritually so, as being alienated from the life of God, and dead in tres-

of life: and the dead were judged out of those things

passes and sins; as when the apostle saith, *The widow that liveth in pleasure is dead whilst she liveth*; 1 Tim. v. 6; and *Christ* unto the church of Sardis, *Thou hast a name to live, and art dead*; Rev. iii. 1. And when he speaks to one of his disciples thus, *Follow thou me, and let the dead bury their dead*; Matt. viii. 22. This is a phrase so common with the *Jews*, that, as *Maimonides* informs us, they proverbially say, *The wicked are dead even while they are alive*: for he, saith *Philo*, *who lives a life of sin, is dead as to a life of happiness*; his soul is dead, and even buried in his lusts and passions. And because the whole *Gentile* world lay more especially under these most unhappy circumstances, whence the apostle styles them *sinners of Gentiles*; Gal. ii. 15; it was proverbially said by the Jewish doctors, *The heathens do not live*; and they in Scripture are more peculiarly intended by that phrase. Hence the apostle saith to the Ephesians and Colossians, Eph. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13, they were *dead in trespasses and sins*; and brings in God thus speaking to the Gentiles, *Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*; Eph. v. 14." These, then, were the dead that were to be judged, and the judgment commenced to take place when "the great white throne" was set up, and the earth and heaven fled away from the face of the Son of man, and at the time of the new heaven and new earth, and of the descent of the new Jerusalem to the earth; xxi. 1—4. There are very serious and weighty objections to giving any other interpretation to the passage before us. 1st. To place this judgment after the immortal resurrection would not agree with the whole drift of this chapter. The scene of the destruction of the dragon was laid on the earth; the reign of Christ was on the earth; after the thousand years had expired nations were found on the

four quarters of the earth, who attacked the camp of the saints; the devil was not carried away from the earth to be cast into the lake of fire; the "great white throne" was on the earth, and was set up at the time "the earth and seas, and the old rolling skies," [Watts,] passed away, and why, then, should it be supposed that the judgment is not on the earth? 2d. In those parts of the New Testament in which the immortal resurrection is unquestionably spoken of, there is no mention made of the setting up of the great white throne, or the passing away of the heavens and the earth, or the judgment of the dead, small and great, according to their works. We reâffirm, that nowhere, in all the Bible, are these things mentioned in connection with the resurrection of the dead into the immortal state, unless it is in the passage before us. If we should interpret *this* passage as having reference to the immortal existence, the interpretation would stand alone, unsupported by another passage in all the Bible. Should not a fact of so vast importance make us hesitate in regard to such an interpretation? 3d. Did not Christ commence to judge the nations *when* he ascended the great white throne? Read the 11th and 12th verses in connection. See again the words of Jesus, Matt. xxv. 31, 32: "*When* the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, *then* shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and *before* him shall be gathered *all nations*," &c., &c. In the parable from which this last extract is made, Jesus represented the nations as being judged by his gospel *according to their works*, — not their faith, or baptism, or professions, but *their works*. See Matt. xxv. 31—46, especially verses 35, 36, and 42, 43. Now, when did the judgment here described take place? Answer. When the Son of man came in his glory. See the

which were written in the books, according to their works.

proof; it follows: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;" Matt. xxv. 31. When did the Son of man come in his glory? We have already proved, beyond all dispute, that it was during the lifetime of some of those who had attended personally upon his ministry. See the proof: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Christ commenced to judge the nations according to their works when he ascended "the great white throne." If, then, the judging of the nations is in the future state, Christ Jesus will not ascend "the great white throne" until all men have entered the future state. And in that event, there is *now* no Mediator, no kingdom of heaven among men. To such absurdities are we driven by the common interpretation of the passage before us.

It is of the utmost importance to be remembered, that the judgment of the nations under the gospel commenced when Christ commenced to reign, and shall not be discontinued until he shall resign the kingdom to the Father. That Christ will resign the kingdom to the Father *at the immortal resurrection*, Paul shows, 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. The judgment began when Christ *assumed* the kingdom; but if we suppose the judgment will be postponed until the immortal resurrection, we make the judgment begin not until Jesus shall *resign* the kingdom. This is most singular, that the judgment should commence not at the time the Lord Jesus *ascended* the throne, but at the time *he shall leave it*! There are no two books in the Bible more nearly

related in point of style than those of Daniel and the Apocalypse. The former is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament, the latter of the New. And we have already shown that the revelator had his eye on the prophecy of Daniel when he wrote the section of the Apocalypse which we are considering. Now Daniel clearly shows that the judgment of the nations commenced simultaneously with the commencement of the reign of Christ. Let the reader consider attentively the following facts. The kingdom of Christ, as all know, commenced in the days of the Roman Empire. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever;" ii. 44. That the judgment commenced at the same time with the commencement of the kingdom, is fully evident from Dan. vii. 9, 14: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: HIS THRONE was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: THE JUDGMENT WAS SET, AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED. — I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Does not this show, that the judgment was established and the

## 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and

books were opened at the same time that the kingdom was given to the Son of man; at the same time that he came in the clouds of heaven? One fulfilment of the description is enough. If it has been once fulfilled, we need look no further; we should be satisfied. We quote the words which Prof. Stuart utters, not on this precise passage, but on the Apocalypse in general: "What John declared would take place shortly, happened according to his prediction; and if so, the dispute *whether it is all to happen over again* [the italics are his] after so many centuries, cannot be a dispute of much interest or importance. One fulfilment is enough." — (Hints, 2d ed., 1842, pp. 141, 142.) That Christ commenced the judgment of the world when he *set up* his kingdom, is evident further from the following considerations. 1st. God, under the Old Testament, judged men in the earth; see Psa. lviii. 11. "Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth." See, also, Prov. xi. 31; Isa. xxvi. 9. When he sent his Son, he did not inform men that the scene of the judgment was to be removed to some other world, but the contrary. 2d. The prophets preasserted, that the judgment of Christ should be in the earth. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth;" Isaiah xlii. 4. 3d. Jesus himself declared that he came into this world for the purposes of judgment. "For judgment *I am come into this world*;" John ix. 39. 4th. He affirmed, when on the earth, that the time of his judgment had come. "Now is the judgment of this world;" John xii. 31. We inquire, in the words just quoted from Prof. Stuart, is it all to happen over again? "One fulfilment is enough." 5th. It has been proved that the judgment commenced simultaneously with the gospel reign, at the same time that Jesus ascended the mediatorial throne. Compare xx. 11, 12. It was at the

time the old heavens and earth passed away, xx. 11, and was simultaneous with the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven to men; xxi. 1—4. Are these things yet future? Surely they are not. And why, then, we ask, should the judgment be thought to be future, which is indissolubly linked to them by the sacred writers? 6th. The judgment of the nations according to their works, if we may rely on our Lord's words, (and surely he is the highest authority,) was begun before the close of the natural lives of some of those who were on the earth, during his personal ministry; Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27. 7th. The judgment of the nations by the Lord Jesus is not a personal judgment, [except in the metaphorical sense,] but a judgment by the principles of his gospel; John xii. 48. See our remarks on this topic under xiv. 6, 7. 8th. The judgments of the Apocalypse are *all* represented as being near at hand, present, already known, and manifested on the earth. They are said to be "*on the earth*;" vi. 10; "the time of the dead, that they should be judged," *IS COME*; xi. 18; "the hour of his judgment *IS COME*;" xiv. 7; "thy judgments *ARE* made manifest;" xv. 4; the seven vials in which was *filled up* the wrath of God, and which contained the seven last plagues of the Apocalypse, were all to be poured out on the earth, not excepting that which was to be poured out on the seat, throne, or place of the beast; xv. 1; xvi. 1; see, also, 5—7; the judgment of Rome was certainly on the earth, because it consisted of death, mourning, famine and conflagration; xviii. 8—10; see, also, xix. 2. Whether men shall be sinners in the post-mortem state, it is not our purpose here to discuss. If they shall be sinners there, they will surely be miserable. But that the judgment of the nations under the gospel is *on this earth*, seems to us so

death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and

clear, from the evidences we have advanced, that it would appear almost impossible to make it more so.

It was a very important event that the revelator undertook to describe in the language before us. It was no less than the ruling and governing of the world by Jesus Christ. It was about to commence in his day. His fancy supplied him with a splendid image of the august epoch of the gospel. The scene was spread out before him like a panorama. He saw the nations all buried in sin, in darkness, in unbelief. It had been a custom of the Hebrew prophets to employ the state of natural death to represent the state of ignorance, unbelief and sin. The revelator availed himself of the same figure. He saw the dead, [not the raised,] small and great, stand before God. He saw the judgment begin; the books were opened. So Daniel had said: "Ten thousand times ten thousand *stood before him*; the *judgment* was set and the *books* were opened." The regions of *hades* were searched to bring up a fitting metaphor to represent the state of the nations at the time the reign of the gospel begun. When men fall into sin and darkness, they are said to fall into *hades*, the state of the dead. While they remain in sin and darkness, they are said to remain in that state. And when the gospel came to the world, all men were regarded as being in that state. The figure of the dead, small and great, standing before God, is very similar to the allegory of Ezekiel — the vision of dry bones. The people were not merely represented as being dead, but their flesh was consumed, and their bones were dry. The prophet was commanded to prophesy, and he did so. "I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them,

and the skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds. O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and I will bring you into the land of Israel;" Ezk. xxxvii. 7—12. Now here the metaphor of literal and absolute death was employed to represent the lost and undone condition of the nation of the Jews. And so, in the revelator's fancy, "the dead, small and great," were used metaphorically to represent the nations in darkness and sin, standing before God, to be judged by the gospel, at the time it was introduced into the world. But when the gospel shall have done its work, and Christ shall resign the kingdom to the Father, then men will not be *dead*, but "*alive* through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our Lord himself employed a similar metaphor when he spoke the parable of the "rich man and Lazarus." He drew his images from the under world; and that parable is founded on the notions which had prevailed among the heathen respecting *hades*, or the state of the dead, and which the Jews had partially received. Yet our Lord did not adopt those heathen notions as true; he used them metaphorically, as one who lived earlier had done the idea of the trees going forth to choose a king.

they were judged every man according to their works.

Judges ix. 8—15. Dr. Macknight, speaking of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, says: "If, from these resemblances, it is thought the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, it will not at all follow that our Lord approved of what the common people thought or spake concerning those matters, agreeably to the notions and language of the Greeks. In parabolical discourses, provided the doctrines inculcated are strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of the vulgar, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with."—(Par. and Com. on the place.) The sacred writers frequently drew their metaphors from *hades*, or the state of the dead. A striking passage is found in Isa. xiv., where the overthrow of the king of Babylon is described in the most glowing language. The inhabitants of *hades* rise up to meet him at his approach; the kings of the lower regions rise from their thrones, and address him. See the passage: "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased," &c. \* \* \* "*Hades* from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations—All they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" verses 4, 9, 10. Now let the reader reflect upon this passage one moment. The scene of it is laid in *hades*, or *hell*. The inhabitants are the dead. The dead rise up, and taunt the king of Babylon at his destruction, saying: "Art thou become like unto us?" This is literally untrue, and impossible; because the dead know not anything. The whole passage is a *prosopopeia*, designed to represent the fall of Babylon. No

one supposes that the views of *hades* here introduced by the prophet were literally correct; all agree that he used them metaphorically, to give force and beauty to the subject of his prophecy. We take the same ground in regard to the passage before us; and the argument is precisely as good in the one case as in the other.

We have thus seen that the judgment begun when Christ ascended "the great white throne;" that the nations *then* stood before him; that the books were *then* opened; and that the dead were *then* judged according to their works. All this, it seems to us, we have proved, beyond carping or contradiction. And here let it be observed, that, as the gospel was established at the end of the Jewish state, we found, when we came, in the course of our Commentary, to that section of the Apocalypse which described the destruction of the Jews, and the establishment of the gospel, this same fact of the judging of the dead, small and great, brought into close proximity to that event. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.* And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because *thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.* And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth;" xi. 15—18. Here again we find the judging of the dead, small and great, closely connected with the commencement of the reign of Christ;

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **Thi**

and all linked indissolubly to the time of the destruction of the Jewish state.\* There are a few other points in the verse before us which we should notice before we proceed to the subsequent verses. ¶ *Before God.*—Some think these events must happen in the eternal world, because it is said those who are judged stand *before God*. So was the earth corrupt *before God*, in the days of Noah; Gen. vi. 11; so the elders of Israel eat bread with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, *before God*; Exod. xviii. 12; so David and all Israel played *before God* with harps and

\*Dr. Woodhouse gets a glimpse of the Scripture doctrine of judgment, in the following note on Rev. xi. 18. His thoughts were evidently much trammelled with preconceived opinions; but the truth was struggling with error in his mind, and broke forth like beams of sun-light through the vistas of a darkened cloud.

"The received translation expresses that the dead are to be judged at this time; but more than this seems to be intended in the original; for before the great day of final retribution, when the *literally* dead shall be raised from their graves for judgment, (as in ch. xxii. 12,) another kind of judgment is to be expected,—that by which the inequalities in the distribution of justice shall be rectified *under the reign of Christ's religion upon earth*. *Krisin tois ethnesin apangelei*, 'He shall utter judgment to the nations,' was the prophetic designation of our Lord, (Matt. xii. 18.) 'All judgment was committed to him by the Father;' (John v. 22;) and his right to exercise it took place from his crucifixion; (John xii. 31;) but this judgment was suspended for a time, *he krisis autou erthe*; (Acts viii. 33;) and was not to be exercised in plenitude of power, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled; (Luke xxi. 24.) And this judgment, though not perfected in all its parts before the great and last day, (which is also comprehended under this seventh and last trumpet,) yet is first to be partially displayed in the destruction of the corrupt worldly powers, and the restoration of a purer religion and morality.

"The time of the dead,' may likewise signify (in that metaphorical sense in which the word *death*, &c., is frequently used) the time when pure religion, dead and buried with the witnesses, shall with them revive and flourish. But no final and certain opinion can be passed on prophecy, before the event shall direct the interpretation."—(Annotations on the Apoc., London, 1828.)

with psalteries, &c.; 1 Chron. xiii. 8; xvi. 1; so Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous *before God*, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; Luke i. 6; so Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet mighty in deed and word *before God* and all the people; Luke xxiv. 9; so Cornelius said to Peter, "Now therefore are we all here present *before God*, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;" Acts x. 33. Let these references suffice, although many more might be given. To do a thing *before God* was to do it in a formal, religious, solemn and conscientious manner, with a sense of his presence and oversight. Such was peculiarly the case with Christ's judgment; the Father was ever with him. The words "before God" were quoted from Dan. vii. 10: "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood *before him*: the judgment was set and the books were opened." This is sufficient on this topic, in this place; but those who wish to see the subject of the divine presence much more fully discussed, are referred to our note on xiv. 10, illustrating the words, "in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb." ¶ *The books were opened.*—The figures here are evidently drawn from a human court of justice. The world is brought to Christ's bar to be judged. The books are opened; i. e., the books of God's law, of his precepts, out of which men are judged. Men are decided to be good or evil as their lives agree with the statutes written in the books. The law was called the book or books of the law; and when the children of Israel were judged, they were judged out of the things written in the books; Deut. xxix. 50, 27; 2 Kings xxii. 13. Jeremiah says: "And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah

is the second death.

hath prophesied against all the nations; and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands;" xxv. 13, 14. This was judging men out of the things written in the books, according to their works. That this *opening of the books* was simultaneous with the commencement of Christ's kingdom, has already been proved in this article so clearly as to preclude all doubt. The dead were judged out of those things written in the books, *according to their works*. That the dead are judged in the present life, *according to their works*, is as plainly taught in the Bible as any other truth. The Jews were judged, under the old covenant, according to their works; and the same principle is maintained under the gospel. If men are judged according to their works in this world, there is no ground for supposing that they will be judged over again, for these same works, in some other state. Professor Stuart says, on other parts of the Apocalypse, "What John declared would *take place shortly*, happened according to his prediction; and if so, the dispute *whether it is all to happen over again*, after so many centuries, cannot be a dispute of much interest or importance. One fulfilment is enough."—(Hints on Proph. 141, 142.) Men were judged out of the things written in the books; i. e., by the statutes and precepts of God. Everything is adjudged to be right as it agrees with these, and wrong as it disagrees with them. All the abettors of false systems must be judged by the gospel; all the opposers of Christianity will be judged by its principles in the reign of Christ which is now going on. Every man shall be thus judged. ¶ *The book of life*.—This expression occurs once only, except in the book of Revelation. See Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; xvii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27; xxii. 19. The book of life was the book of favorable remembrance; the roll of the true

15 And whosoever was not

and faithful Christians who endured through all trials, unto the end. Whosoever's name was not found on this, was destroyed with the unbelievers. See the notes on iii. 5; xiii. 8; where our opinion will be found fully expressed on the phrase "book of life." We need not repeat the arguments and illustrations in this place.

13. *Sea gave up the dead*.—The metaphor here corresponds to that of the preceding verse. The dead must come from every place in which they may be supposed to lie—from the sea as well as the land. Death and hell (or *hades*, the state of the dead) must give up their prisoners to be judged by the gospel. The intent of the metaphor is, that men, from all their hiding places, their places of retreat, and rest, and security, shall be brought forth to be judged. ¶ *Death and hell delivered up the dead*.—Isaiah used a somewhat similar metaphor: "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. \* \* \* Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it;" Isaiah xxviii. 15, 18. Here, evidently, death and hell delivered up their dead, to be judged by God's truth. The refuge of lies was swept away, falsehood was demolished by the overflowing scourge of God's judgments. The metaphors of the prophet and the revelator were very similar. To show that men cannot escape the judgments of the Almighty, however safe from them they may fancy themselves to be, the prophet says: "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord;" Obadiah i. 4. And again, "Though

found written in the book of life | was cast into the lake of fire.

they dig into hell, thence shall my nand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them;" Amos ix. 2, 3. Thus we see, that these metaphors of bringing men from death, from hades, or hell, and from the bottom of the sea, to judge them, are used in reference to temporal judgments. The revelator evidently quotes his metaphors from the prophets. The simple meaning is, that none, wherever they may be, can escape from the judgments of God, "who will render to every man according to his works."

14. *Death and hell.* — The primary question here is, What do death and hell stand for in the Apocalypse? Hell, in this place, is a translation of *hades*, meaning, primarily, *the state of the dead*; but it is used metaphorically for darkness, opposition, desolation, prostration, destruction, &c.; Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15; Matt. xvi. 18. In Rev. i. 18, Jesus claims to "have the keys of hell and of death;" i. e., he had power over everything represented by hell and by death. The gates of hell, or *hades*, Matt. xvi. 18, were the powers of opposition which could not prevail against the church of Christ, because Christ had the keys of the gates, i. e., power over them; he opened, and no man could shut; he shut, and no man could open; Rev. iii. 7. When it is said that death and hell followed in the path of the pale horse, Rev. vi. 8, we are to understand it as of the evils attendant on pestilence, viz., paleness, sinking, destruction, death. Death and hell can mean nothing more here. These are the only instances in the Apocalypse of the use of these terms, until we come to the 20th chapter. The whole is metaphorical. The dead

were the spiritually dead — a condition in which Jesus found mankind when he ascended the mediatorial throne; vers. 11, 12; the books are to be understood metaphorically, as is also "the book of life;" the judgment, we have shown, was on the earth, for this was the purpose for which Jesus came into the world; John ix. 39; xii. 31. In carrying out the metaphor, the dead are all called to come to the throne to be judged; a figure somewhat similar to that in the previous chapter, of calling the fowls of heaven to gather themselves together to the supper of the great God; xix. 17; and hence the sea, where those lie who died on the waters, and the graves, where those rest who died on the land, are called on to surrender their tenants, that they may come up and be judged at the gospel bar. This all agrees with the revelator's plan of selecting "the dead" to represent men in their lost and undone condition, before they knew the gospel, which is the precise metaphor Ezekiel had set him the example of using; xxxvii. 12—14: "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land." In fact, (and it may as well be stated here as anywhere,) the metaphors of the revelator in this section of the Apocalypse are, nearly all of them, taken from the 37th chapter of Ezekiel and the remaining chapters of that book.

## EZEKIEL:

## REVELATION:

Calling dead from their graves; xxxvii. 13. 1—14.

The same; xx. 12

Gog and Magog array themselves against the people of God; xxxviii., xxxix.

The same; xx. 7--9.

## EZEKIEL:

The fowls are called to the banquet of the dead; xxxix. 17—20.

The prophet's vision of the new city of Jerusalem; chaps. xl. to xlv.

The prophet's vision of the holy waters proceeding out of the temple; xlvii.

## REVELATION:

The same; xix. 17 to 21.

The new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, and is very particularly described; chaps. xxi. xxii.

The river of the water of life proceeding from the throne of God; xxii. 1.

That the revelator borrowed the whole train of his metaphors, in the closing up of the Apocalypse, from the latter part of the prophecy of Ezekiel, is fully manifest; and the calling the dead up out of their graves to be judged by the gospel, is no more to be interpreted literally, as if belonging to the immortal state, than the dry bones of the valley, in Ezekiel's vision. And as the gospel was intended to put an end to all tears, and *death*, and sorrow, and crying, and pain, and everything of that kind; xxi. 3, 4; how appropriately is it said, "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire;" i. e., were destroyed. ¶ *Lake of fire*.—We have already explained this metaphor, under xix. 20, and xx. 10. It was a metaphor for utter destruction. Death and hell were to be utterly destroyed by the reign of the gospel, as is plainly taught in the 21st chapter of the Apocalypse. Everything that opposed the gospel was to be put down. ¶ *The second death*.—The first death was the death in sin, in which the gospel found men; for when men were raised from that state of moral death, they were said to experience "the first resurrection." Those who received the first resurrection lived and reigned with Christ during the time called "the thousand years." Such as did not embrace the gospel, in the empire, during that time, suffered the second death; i. e., remained dead after the happy period of the church, and were destroyed as the enemies of Jesus, with everything that opposed the gospel. As there

was a second death, so there was also a second resurrection; for, if there were no second resurrection, it would not be proper to speak of "the first resurrection." And we do not know what the second resurrection can more appropriately represent than the extended and glorious spread of the gospel, immediately described by the revelator, when God should wipe away all tears; when there should be *no more death*, [the second death being annihilated,] neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, and when all things should be made new.

15. *Not written*.—Those not written in the book of life were the enemies of Christianity throughout the empire—the heathen power, and all whom the beast and the dragon had kept under their authority. They were all to be utterly destroyed as such. ¶ *Lake of fire*.—They were to be cast into the lake of fire; not in the future state, for we have no account of any lake of fire there; besides, if it were there, how could the beast and the false prophet have been cast *alive* into it? The Jews met a similar fate for their wickedness and opposition to God. See Isaiah xxxi. 9, and Ezk. xxii. 18—22: "Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." This is a very similar metaphor to

casting into the lake of fire; but who ever supposed, even for one moment, that it was in the immortal state? See the notes on xix. 20, and xx. 10. Pagan Rome met with a similar fate to that of the Jews; not indeed as early, but as fatally and irrecoverably. Both are "twice dead, plucked up by the roots;" Jude 12; totally destroyed. They were not found written in the book of life, and were cast into the lake of fire. The destruction of Idumea was compared to being laid waste by fire and brimstone. "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever;" Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10. How conformable, then, to prophetic style, to represent a people who were to be totally destroyed as being about to be cast into the lake of fire. Paganism was to be utterly destroyed throughout the empire: it was done. We have thus gone through with the twentieth chapter of the book. As we find, at the close of this chapter, that the earth and heaven were said to flee away, so we shall see that the twenty-first chapter opens with the coming of the "new heaven and the new earth." We have interpreted the twentieth chapter in harmony with the whole Apocalypse, and preserved a beautiful analogy throughout. There is one very serious objection to applying Rev. xx. 12—15 to the immortal state; it breaks up the plan of the Apocalypse. The commentators who have done this have been obliged, in making up *their* plan of the book, to trace out a series of events reaching to the immortal resurrection. They have tasked their imaginations, therefore, to make out such a series, to which they can apply certain parts of the Apocalypse; and in doing this, almost

every commentator has had a **system** of his own; and the plan of one is as good as the plan of any other. They are all confusion worse confounded. Such commentators bring in the Goths, the Lombards, the French, the Popes, the Catholic Church, [which they have represented as the woman riding on the beast,] the Saracens, the Mahometans; and having applied, or rather misapplied, much of the Apocalypse to past history, they have gone on to prophesy of what is to happen in the future. Some have introduced the French Revolution; the rise and fall of Bonaparte; the events in Egypt, Turkey, and India; and all this for what? Because they have felt themselves obliged to make out a series of events reaching to the immortal resurrection of the dead. It is in this vast chasm, reaching from the fall of the Roman Empire forward to the immortal resurrection, that the principal errors of commentators, in regard to the Apocalypse, are found. If they would but allow that the judgment of the dead, small and great, xx. 12—15, should be explained as we have explained it, they might make of the Apocalypse a beautiful and consistent book; but as long as they seek to make out that the passage referred to should be applied to the post-mortem state, and is not to be fulfilled until after the immortal resurrection, they must seek to fill up the chasm we have mentioned from their own wits; and they thus bring endless contradictions and controversies into the church. They make themselves the sport of unbelievers. If the evil stopped here we should not so earnestly complain. But they abuse the Apocalypse itself; they bring that into disrepute: for careless men will not examine whether their interpretations properly belong to the book; but, disgusted with phantasms, visions and contradictions, they will abandon commentators, Apocalypse and all, as utterly unworthy of notice.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Preliminary Remarks.* — We found, in the last chapter, the closing up of the account of the destruction of heathenism. The final act in that drama was the destruction of "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," which is described in the 10th verse.

At the 11th verse we showed that the account of the reign of the gospel commenced. The "great white throne" was the mediatorial throne; not a real throne, any more than the holy city, new Jerusalem, was a real city. It was a metaphor to represent the reign of Christ in the gospel; before whom the nations, represented by the "dead, small and great," stood to be judged. This judgment we found to refer not to the future state, because it commenced to take place at the time Christ's kingdom began, and will be finished at the resurrection of the dead, when all souls shall be subject to Christ, in the same sense in which Christ is subject to the Father, and God shall be all in all; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. None can enter into this kingdom except those who are fully prepared. The stones must be hewn and squared before they can be incorporated into the edifice; and this shall be done for every soul, before the completion of the grand design mentioned in the passage last indicated.

The 21st chapter is but a continuation of the subject commenced at the 11th verse of the preceding chapter. Having foretold the establishment of the mediatorial throne, and the judgment of the nations by the gospel, the revelator proceeds, in the next place, to describe the descent of the new covenant, under the metaphor of the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as will be seen below.

1. *New heaven and a new earth.* —

first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The *new* heaven and *new* earth here refer to what had been said in the 11th verse of the preceding chapter: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the *earth* and the *heaven* fled away; and there was found no place for them." Now the revelator says, in the verse before us: "I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth; for the *first* heaven and the *first* earth were passed away," &c. The *new* here are the opposite or counterpart of the *old*, and come in to take the place of the *old*. It is expressly said they were introduced because "the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Now, if the *new* heaven and the *new* earth refer to the introduction of the gospel, what can the passing away of the former heaven and earth refer to, but the passing away of the law? If so, (and who can doubt it?) then the judgment of the nations, small and great, was connected with the passing away of the law, and not with the passing away of the *material* heaven and earth. We have already shown that it had been the custom of the Jewish writers, almost from the earliest antiquity, to represent changes among the affairs of men by changes among the heavenly bodies — the sun, moon, the stars; and the ardent imaginations of the prophets conceived sublimer metaphors to represent the greater changes, even the passing away of the whole heaven, and the earth, and the sea. There is no principle of the interpretation of Scripture metaphors more clearly settled than this. To describe the passing away of the religions that prevailed before the introduction of the gospel, but more especially that of Moses, the sacred writers use the metaphor of the dissolution of all things; and hence Peter said in his day, in connection with the "judging of the quick

## 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming

and the dead," "The *end of all things* is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and *watch* unto prayer;" 1 Peter iv. 6, 7. From the literal application of these passages, so incontestably proved to be *metaphorical*, has arisen that huge fabric of error, viz., that the judging of the quick and the dead is not to take place while the material earth remaineth; hence it is thought that it is still future, and shall not transpire until the resurrection of the dead into the immortal state. Such a sentiment rests on a total perversion of the true sense of the Bible; and when that good book shall come to be more fully understood, the whole fabric must fall. In the forms of speech adopted by the Jewish prophets any great and favorable change might be represented by the creation of a *new* heaven and a *new* earth. In proof of this, see Isaiah lxxv. 17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Now what does this mean? The next verse will show very clearly: "But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." From this it is evident that by the creation of a new heaven and new earth was meant a great and favorable change in the condition of Jerusalem. Observe the three points: 1st. "I create new heavens and a new earth." 2d. "Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create." 3d. "For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." The prophet then goes on to describe the prosperous and glorious condition of the Jews that was to ensue, as follows: "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy

the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord;" 21—25. The improved condition of Jerusalem was intended by the metaphor of the new heavens and new earth as used by Isaiah; and it was the improved condition of mankind, under the gospel, that was denoted by the new heavens and new earth of the revelator. Peter, in his second Epistle, exhorted his brethren to be "mindful of the words which were spoken before by the *holy prophets*;" iii. 2. He then said, "There shall come scoffers in the *last days*," i. e., the last days of the former covenant; ver. 3. By "last days," in this place, is meant the same as "*the end of all things*;" 1 Peter iv. 7. St. Peter then proceeds to make a distinction between the *material* heavens and earth and the heavens and earth in the metaphorical sense. The one was the earth that was overflowed with water in the time of the flood, 2 Peter iii. 5, 6, and which has not been destroyed, but still remains to this day; the other were the heavens and the earth which were [in Peter's day] reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; ver. 7. This "day of judgment," or "day of the Lord," is mentioned again in vers. 10—12, as follows: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things

down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat?" This was "the end of all things," already referred to—the passing away of the old heavens and earth mentioned Rev. xx. 11, as follows: "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Peter proceeds to say: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" ver. 13. Here he evidently refers to God's promise to create a new heaven and a new earth, which promise we have already quoted from the 65th chapter of Isaiah. So the revelator, after he had described the passing away of the former heavens and earth, at "the day of the Lord," or day of judgment of the dead, small and great, proceeds to speak of the coming of the new heavens and new earth—that is, of a very improved condition in the state of mankind. But he does it in his own style. Isaiah's metaphor no longer remains a mere metaphor, but swells, in the revelator's hands, into a splendid allegory. He not only has a new heaven and a new earth, but a new city of Jerusalem also, coming down from God out of heaven, beautifully adorned, having a wall great and high, with twelve gates, &c. &c. The new heavens and the new earth denote the improved condition about to take place in the affairs of the world; and the new Jerusalem denotes the gospel, by the means of which that improvement is to be produced.

2. *1 John*.—The revelator gives his name only in i. 1, 4, 9, and in this

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with

place, and xxii. 8. And there was a peculiar propriety in his naming himself here, as he was the only one of the apostles who lived until the descent of the new Jerusalem, or the coming of Christ in power and glory, took place. See John xxi. 23. How forcible, therefore, are these words: "*1 John saw.*" ¶ *Holy city, new Jerusalem*.—The city of Jerusalem being the place where the worship of God was established, and where all the pomp and splendor of the temple-service was seen, was called the "holy city." See Isaiah's description: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean;" lii. 1. This was Jerusalem proper, the old Jerusalem. It was associated with all that was sacred in the eyes of the Jews. Like the word Zion, the very name became almost a part and parcel of the Jewish religion. It sometimes stood metaphorically for the religion itself. How appropriate, how beautiful, how striking a metaphor to the Jewish Christians was the representation of the coming of the gospel covenant under the figure of the holy city,—not the old Jerusalem, but the *new* city of that name, coming down from God out of heaven. We cannot conceive of an image more fitting to the revelator's times, or more attracting to the Jewish Christians who were everywhere scattered abroad. This was the city referred to by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, when he congratulates them as follows: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in

men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his peo-

ple, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel;" xii. 22—24. Here it is called the *heavenly* or *spiritual* Jerusalem, which agrees with the description of the revelator, who says it came down from God out of heaven. We shall henceforward find nothing further said in the Apocalypse of the local heaven, or dwelling-place of God, introduced into the drama, at chap. iv. It will be the spiritual heaven, the new Jerusalem, from this place. See our note on xix. 5. ¶ *Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*—The only meaning here is, that it was beautifully and appropriately adorned. The bride prepares herself in beautiful and fitting attire to receive the bridegroom. See xix. 7, 8: "His wife hath made herself ready," &c. The heavenly Jerusalem, i. e., the Lamb's wife, (ver. 9,) is gloriously attired for his advent. Rome had been represented by a woman, and now a similar metaphor is used to represent the new Jerusalem. They are both represented first as women, then as cities. See xvii. 1; xix. 7, 8. But the first woman is an impure harlot; the second is a virgin bride. The first city is idolatrous and wicked; the second is "the holy city," the new Jerusalem. See our note on iii. 12. The glory of this city we shall find described in subsequent verses of this chapter.

3. *The tabernacle of God is with men.*—As the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is described as having come down from heaven, it is said God will henceforth dwell with mer Zion of old was said to be his habitation. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell: for I have

desired it;" *Psa. cxxxii. 13, 14.* ¶ *He will dwell with them.*—During the journey of the Israelites to Canaan, the divine presence was supposed to dwell in the tabernacle,—a tent, or covering, the holiest of all places in the sight of the Jews. After the temple was built, the tabernacle was set up therein. From these facts, any place where God's spiritual presence, or image, was manifested, was called the tabernacle of the Lord, because he was supposed to dwell there. When the Jewish religion passed away, the Christian took its place; when the Jewish tabernacle was abolished, the Christian was set up in its stead. "But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" *Heb. ix. 11, 12.* Christians, in whom the spirit of the Lord is seen, whose image dwells in their hearts, are said to be the tabernacle, or temple of God, and in the precise sense too in which the metaphor is used by the revelator. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" *2 Cor. vi. 16.* God came down to dwell with men spiritually in the gospel; to establish new relations with them; to make himself known more fully to them; to dwell in more intimate connection; to make them feel that he was their God and they were his people. The veil of the old covenant was to be taken away. In the temple he was supposed to dwell beneath the tabernacle; under the gospel he would dwell in men's hearts. *Isaiah, the*

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more

evangelical prophet, seemed to catch the same idea. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;" Isaiah lvii. 15. Thus, the prophet held, that although the high and lofty One inhabiteth eternity, yet he dwelleth in the heart of the contrite and humble. ¶ *They shall be his people.*—To be God's people, was to be a people who knew and felt their allegiance to him; and when he is said to be their God, and to dwell with them, the meaning is, that they should enjoy a large share of the divine presence and blessing, and all collateral prosperity. See Zech. viii. 8; compare 9—15.

4. *Wipe away all tears, &c.*—This was the consequence of God dwelling among them; this was the new and highly improved state of things denoted by the new heavens and new earth. This description of the consequences of the gospel among men is beautiful. Can the imagination conceive of anything more brilliant? All tears are wiped away; death is abolished; and neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain remains. These beautiful metaphors were copied from the prophet Isaiah. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it;" xxv. 8. It is supposed that Isaiah was looking forward to the coming of the gospel, and was foretelling the glorious consequences that would result from that great system of divine **grace**. Paul extends the language

pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto

of the prophet even to the abolition of death at the time of the general resurrection of mankind;" 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54. In his view, it will be then that God shall wipe tears from all faces; and cause death, and sorrow, and sighing, to cease forever. We have found these glorious consequences of the gospel before referred to in the Apocalypse; see vii. 17. It is peculiarly worthy of observation, that Paul did not believe that all the consequences of the gospel would be fully realized until the immortal resurrection of the dead. These consequences may be realized in part in the present world; but in his view the whole force of the passage is not here felt.

¶ *The former things are passed away.*—The meaning here is, that the former state of things should no more be known. The prophet had said, when speaking of the new state of things denoted by the new heavens and new earth: "And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;" Isa. lxi. 17. The revelator expresses the same idea by saying, "the former things are passed away." The Christians were continually reminded of their former or unconverted state, and of the deeds thereof, as things to be specially avoided in their new condition. Their "former conversation" was put off; Eph. iv. 22; and they were not to fashion themselves according to their "former lusts;" 1 Pet. i. 14. Thus with the Christian, the former things must pass away. But more of this under the next verse.

5. *I make all things new.*—The whole design here is to show that the gospel was designed to produce an improved condition of the world—an entirely new state. This is begun in the heart of every believer. If he

me, Write : for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is

has been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and knows and feels that Christ is his Lord, and lives accordingly, he is translated thereby into a new state. Hence Paul said: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new;" 2 Cor. v. 17. When the house of Israel turned from their wicked ways, to serve God, the change was described by very striking figures. To forsake wickedness was to "turn to the Lord;" Isa. lv. 7. To become disgusted with vice, and to be brought to love the ways of the Lord, was described by the prophet as follows: "Make you a *new* heart and a *new* spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezk. xviii. 31. These forms of speech, so clearly metaphorical, are preserved in the New Testament. Hence, the change from false religion to Christianity was called a *new* creation, or regeneration; a *new* birth; the Christian was a *new* creature; 2 Cor. v. 17; he "put on the new man;" Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10; he entered the "new Jerusalem," and had a "new name;" Rev. iii. 12; a "new song was put in his mouth," because he had a new occasion of rejoicing; v. 9; xiv. 3. How strikingly true, then, when God sent the new covenant into the world, was the assurance, "Behold, I make all things *new*." ¶ *Write: for these words are true and faithful.*— Things that were to be understood, that were to be remembered, and that were of vast importance to men, it was customary to command them to write. They were not to be left to be transmitted by tradition. Hence Moses was commanded to write the words of the law; Exod. xxxiv. 27. To write a thing on the tablet of the heart, was to impress it deeply there. The revelator was commanded to write these things, because they were

done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst

true and faithful, and of vast importance to men, worthy of special record, and of being transmitted by this sure method from age to age.

6. *It is done.*—The phrase "it is done" is to be understood here, *it is determined*, it is certain. As if the spirit had said to the revelator, What I have written to you is true and faithful, and the events which I have foretold shall certainly come to pass. It is determined in the decrees of him who is able to fulfil his pleasure. ¶ *Alpha and Omega.*—He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Alpha is the first letter and Omega the last of the Greek alphabet. To say that God is Alpha and Omega, is to say that he is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. See Rev. i. 8; xxii. 13. ¶ *Water of life.*—To show the efficacy of the gospel in healing the moral maladies of men, it is represented under the metaphor of water, and more especially of the "water of life." See Isa. lv. 1. Examine, also, the beautiful allegory that occurred in the course of the conversation between Jesus and the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, John iv. 10—15. Here Jesus compares his gospel to living water; and the wants of men destitute of the gospel are represented by thirst. There is something in the gospel which completely satisfies the moral wants of mankind, as water satisfies the thirsting man; and the gospel furnishes a satisfaction so full and complete to the human soul, that he who receives it, it is said, "shall never thirst." One of the great and leading consequences of the gospel is referred to here. It wipes away all tears, abolishes death, removes sorrow, and crying, and pain, and in this way gives men perfect satisfaction. When, therefore, he that sat upon the throne said, It is done, — I have the power to fulfil what I have

of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

said, — I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, he adds, as the great and leading consequence of all this, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." As if he had said, that system is now set up which is to supply all the moral wants of the world. See Rev. vii. 17, and xxii. 17.

7. *He that overcometh.* — It is the Christian's duty to overcome the world. Jesus overcame the world ; John xvi. 33. The coadjutors of the beast made war upon the Lamb, and he overcame them ; Rev. xvii. 14. John said : "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?" 1 John v. 4, 5. The whole of this may be expressed in one word, the Christian is not to be overcome of evil, but is to overcome evil with good ; Rom. xii. 21. ¶ *Shall inherit all things.* — He that overcometh, i. e., he that remains firmly attached to the principles of the gospel in the midst of persecution, "shall inherit all things." All things, here, signify all those blessings of which the revelator had been speaking. ¶ *I will be his God ;* — i. e., I will be his portion, I will be his protector, I will appear in a near and important relation to him, like that of a God and a father.

8. *The fearful and unbelieving.* — The opposite class from those mentioned in the last verse are here intended, viz., those who had not been brought to the knowledge of the truth, or if they had, had not remained steadfast. They were *fearful* ; they did not embrace Christianity, through

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in

want of courage and fortitude to bear the perils of being Christians. They were *unbelieving*. Faith gains the victory ; 1 John v. 4, 10 ; and these had it not. They were *abominable*, for they were guilty of the worst of vices, those that were most degrading to men. They were murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and liars, — and no wonder they were said to be abominable. ¶ *Shall have their part in the lake, &c.* — Now these could not enter into the kingdom of God. St. Paul said : "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not received ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God ;" 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. No wonder, then, that the revelator said, they "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death." The Christians had part in the new Jerusalem. They did "eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God ;" Rev. ii. 7 ; they "were not hurt of the second death ;" ii. 11 ; they eat of the hidden manna, and had a white stone given to them, and in that stone a new name ; ii. 17 ; they had "power over the nations ;" ii. 26 ; they were clothed in white raiment, their names were in the book of life, and they were confessed before God ; iii. 5 ; they were pillars in the temple of God ; and the name of God and the Lamb was written upon them, and the name of the New Jerusalem ; iii. 12 ; they sat with Jesus on his throne, as he sat with his Father ; iii. 21. This was the part the Christians enjoyed.

the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

These metaphors were used to describe their happy state, even in the midst of outward trials and persecutions. The worshippers of the beast had no rest day nor night; but those who were crucified with Christ rested from their labors and sufferings, when the persecuting power was destroyed, and their works of success followed them; xiv. 10—13. Peace reigned in their souls. But the unbelievers were in an entirely opposite condition, described by opposite metaphors. They had "their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." This lake of fire we have fully explained, under Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10, 14, 15. It was a metaphor to represent utter destitution. The expression is made intensive, to show the lost and undone condition of those who were deterred by fear and vice from embracing the gospel. The slightest proof has not been discovered, in the whole Apocalypse, that these metaphors refer at all to the future state. ¶ *Which is the second death.*—In Ezekiel's metaphor of the valley of dry bones, the Jews were represented not merely as dead, but wasted away; their flesh was entirely gone, and their bones were dry; they were twice dead. The figure was made thus intensive to show their absolutely lost and undone condition without the help of God. So in the case before us. The unbelievers were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Not that this was done actually; no one puts such a construction upon the words. Judaism and heathenism were to be actually destroyed by the power of the gospel; and the poor subjects of them were to remain in an absolutely lost and undone condition as long as they remained such subjects. They had their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, the opposite

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the

condition from that which the Christians enjoyed. But does the revelator intend that persons in this condition can never be brought into the kingdom of God? Certainly not. For then how should tears be wiped from all faces? how should *the rest* of the dead live; xx. 5; those who had not partaken in the first resurrection? how should the final harvest, that was to follow the first fruits, be gathered in? how could it be said, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain? xxi. 4. It will be remembered, that when Paul said absolutely, "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," he was particular to remark to the Christians, "SUCH *were* some of you; but ye are WASHED, ye are SANCTIFIED, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God;" 1 Cor. vi. 11. This explains the whole matter. While men are in the state of sin which we have described, they are not in the kingdom of God, and cannot be; but they may be washed, and purified, and fitted for that kingdom. We have shown incontestably that fire and brimstone are metaphors for temporal calamities. We consider these figures to be parallel to the furnace of fire into which the Jews were cast; Matt. xiii. 42. Those who wish to know whether this fire is a metaphor of temporal judgments may consult Isaiah xxxi. 9; Ezk. xxii. 17—22. Give particular attention to the passages here referred to.

9. *One of the seven angels.*—We now come to a new section in the chapter. The revelator had given assurance of the coming of a much improved state of things, under the metaphor of the new heavens and new earth. This was to be done by means of the gospel, which was represented by the descent of the holy city, new Jerusalem, from heaven.

seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

The consequences of the establishment of the gospel are then described, such as the wiping away of all tears, and the utter abolishing of death, and sorrow and crying. All things shall be made new. He that overcometh shall inherit all the blessings, while the fearful, unbelieving, &c., shall suffer not only the deprivation thereof, but the punishments indicated by the lake of fire. Such are the subjects of the preceding verses. But at the 9th verse, the revelator proceeds to a more particular description of the holy city, new Jerusalem. And to introduce this, he states, that one of the seven angels who had the seven, last plagues, xv. 1, talked with him saying, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife;" xix. 7. The figure of a woman is frequently used to represent the church, and sometimes the gospel covenant; Gal. iv. 24—26. The bride, in this case, was the new Jerusalem, as subsequent verses will show.

10. *Showed me the great city.*—The carrying of the revelator to an exceeding high mountain is altogether scenic, like the angel standing in the sun; xix. 17. The angel showed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. This spiritual city was the bride, which the angel had promised to show him; ver. 9; and it was the new Jerusalem mentioned ver. 2. The Jews had the custom of describing the enslaving and carrying away of a people into captivity, under the

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the

metaphor of the destruction of a city; and so the return from captivity, or the renewed prosperity of a people, was represented, on the contrary, by planning and building a new city on a scale of great magnificence. The example which the revelator follows may be found in Ezekiel, chap. xli.—xlvi. — (Lightfoot's Works, iii. 367.)

11. *The glory of God.*—This holy city, new Jerusalem, was full of the glory of God; Isaiah lx. 1, 2. The covenant of the gospel was the more perfect exhibition of the glory of God, which the world hath ever seen. ¶ *Jasper stone.*—The jasper was a beautiful stone, sometimes purple, sometimes cerulean and sometimes green. The stone spoken of here was clear as crystal. The Holy One is said to have had the appearance of a jasper and a sardine stone; iv. 3. The light of the new Jerusalem was like that reflected from a beautiful jasper, clear as crystal. It was clear, it was bright, and yet not painful to the eye. See Isaiah liv. 11, 12, and lviii. 8.

12. *A wall great and high.*—In setting forth the beauties and excellencies of the new Jerusalem, all that would be great, and glorious, and necessary in an earthly city, is here brought in. Hence mention is made of the wall great and high, which can mean nothing as appertaining to new Jerusalem, but is put into the description merely to make the image of the city complete. Cities, of old, were built with walls, which were one of their principal means of

twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on

strength and defence. The prophet Isaiah said, God appoints "salvation for walls and bulwarks;" Isa. xxvi. 1; lx. 10—18. ¶ *Twelve gates.*—Many very wise speculations have been made about the twelve gates, with the twelve angels, &c. The gates, in our judgment, are mentioned only because there must be gates to a city which has walls, otherwise there can be no entrance. The number twelve was chosen because it was a famous sacred number with the Jews, on account of the number of the tribes; and as, if there be gates, there must be janitors or gate-keepers, so an angel is placed at each gate. The names of the tribes were engraved upon the gates, to show who resided within the walls. The twelve tribes here are to be understood metaphorically, as in chapter vii. 5—8.

13. *Three gates.*—Hammond, without the acuteness he frequently shows, supposes that "these entrances, three toward every quarter, denote the coming in of men from all quarters of the world to the faith of Christ, or doctrines of the gospel, and their baptism, their sacrament of admission to all, performed by a threefold immersion, [as there were three gates on each side,] and profession of faith in the three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost."—(Com. on the place.) Metaphors were not designed to be treated in this manner. They are not to be explained and applied in every point. The object of the revelator was to show a very beautiful and perfect city, to represent the spiritual city or the new Jerusalem. And as there must be gates where there are walls, and as twelve gates answered to the twelve tribes, and as no city has all its gates on one side of it, it was a very natural division of them to put three in each wall, facing the

the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in

four cardinal points of the compass. We certainly cannot see any propriety in any other supposition touching this verse; but there are persons who can discover images and proofs of the trinity wherever the number three is mentioned.

14. *Twelve foundations.*—As the revelator had mentioned the twelve tribes, whose names he had represented as being engraved upon the twelve gates, so he had a desire to mention the twelve apostles also. He therefore supposed the city to have twelve principal foundations, and on these were placed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This agrees precisely with the beautiful metaphor of the apostle: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the spirit;" Eph. ii. 19—22. Does not this show that the revelator was not describing things that are to take place after the immortal resurrection, but the state of the church on earth? Peter was one of the principal stones in this foundation. See Matt. xvi. 18. If the revelator was describing the state of the church on earth, does it not show that all that is described in the twentieth chapter must be on the earth? If it had been a judgment after the immortal resurrection, which is described in the twentieth chapter, how is it that we find the church still described as existing on the earth?

15. *Measure the city.*—As, according to the style of the prophets, it

them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15. And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

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became necessary to give the measurement of the city, [Ezek. xl. 3; Zech. ii. 1; Rev. xi. 1.] so the revelator supposed the angel that talked with him to have a golden reed in his hand, for the purpose of measuring the city, the gates, and the wall. These things show how fully he was instructed in the style of the prophets.

16. *Twelve thousand furlongs.*—These dimensions were surely imaginary. Everything is made conformable to the most exact rule. The city is in the form of a cube—the length, breadth, and height, are equal. It is an extraordinary city, constructed with the most exquisite art, but is surely metaphorical.

17. *An hundred and forty and four cubits.*—Twelve times twelve cubits—the number twelve still dwelling in his mind. A cubit is the ordinary length of the human arm, from the elbow (cubitus) to the tip of the longest finger. The revelator says, although he was talking with the angel, that he intended the cubit of ordinary length; i. e., according to the measure of a man.

18. *Of jasper.*—Having got through

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald.

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl: the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

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the measurement, he now comes to speak of the external beauty, richness and glory of this imaginary city. The wall seemed to be of itself like jasper-stone, beautiful, very brilliant, and yet not painful to behold. ¶ *Pure gold.*—The city was rich beyond all comparison, being built of gold, polished to that high degree, that, although gold, it had still, for transparency, the appearance of glass.

19, 20. *All manner of precious stones.*—The foundations of the city represented the twelve apostles of the Lamb. These foundations are represented as being ornamented with twelve kinds of precious stones, like the breastplate of the high priest. These stones were set one for each tribe, as a kind of sign of that tribe. See Exod. xxxviii 17—21. It was perhaps from this fact that a covering of precious stones came to signify the highest state of glory, prosperity and riches. So the original state of Tyre was expressed: "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the work

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Al-

mighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

manship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created;" Ezekiel xxviii. 13. The foundations of the new Jerusalem were garnished in the highest possible degree. The whole intent is to make the metaphor transcendently glorious. The revelator copies from the prophets.

21. *Twelve pearls.*—Pearls were of great value; and were used as representations of the most precious things; Matt. vii. 6. They were used for personal ornaments, as they are to this day; 1 Tim. ii. 9. Each of the gates was said to be of one pearl—a thing impossible in itself, because the pearl being found in a fish, no one could have been obtained large enough for a gate of a city, much less a city of such dimensions. This clearly shows that the expression was hyperbolic, and that the design was to describe a city of exceeding richness, adorned in the highest manner, as a metaphor of the gospel, or covenant of God, in which he dwells with men. We repeat a remark made before, that the Jews were accustomed to represent the enslaving of a people under the metaphor of the destruction of a city; and a return from captivity, or a renewed or increased state of prosperity, was represented by the rebuilding of a city. It is so in the case before us. It is measured with great exactness, but the whole, surely, is metaphorical.

22. *I saw no temple therein.*—In the old city of Jerusalem there was a temple; i. e., an outward, literal, temple; but there was no such temple in the new Jerusalem; yet the new city was not without a temple in the

highest and most important sense, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. God was present in this Jerusalem in a nearer and more definite sense than he had been present in the former. In the new Jerusalem his presence will not be confined to place. There is no need of an outward temple; he is himself the temple. He dwelleth not now in temples made with hands; Acts xvii. 24. The worship of God under the new covenant is confined to no place. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father;" John iv. 21. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

"Where'er the saints assemble now,  
There is a house for God."

23. *The glory of God did lighten it.*—It was a spiritual city—the sun need not shine upon it. The glory of God made it radiant; the sun of righteousness shed upon it its beams. Its light was spiritual light. The Jews, who abounded in the richest metaphors, were accustomed to say, when the glory of God was peculiarly manifested in a place, that it had no longer the need of the sun and moon. See Isaiah lx. 18–20: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but th

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the

Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." The revelator applies the metaphors of the prophets to the superior beauty and radiance of the gospel.

24. *Them which are saved.* — The nations of them that are saved were those who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and saved thereby. The Christians were called *the saved*; 1 Cor. i. 18. They were saved from error, sin, and moral death.

¶ *Walk in the light of it.* — They walked in the light of the new Jerusalem. Before the coming of Christ, the people walked in darkness; Isa. ix. 2. When he came, they saw a great light. But they did not all walk in that light; some continued in darkness. *The saved*, however, walked in the light of the new Jerusalem.

¶ *Bring their glory, &c.* — And as kings, in building up an earthly city, use their immense influence and treasures, to bring glory and honor to it, they are said to do the same here: "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me;" Isa. xlix. 23. In describing the glory of Solomon's kingdom, the Psalmist said, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents;

glory and honor of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him;" Psa. lxxii. 10, 11.

25, 26. — *Shall not be shut.* — The figure here is principally quoted from Isaiah, to whom the revelator became frequently indebted: "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought;" Isa. lx. 11. In earthly cities the gates are shut at night, to exclude thieves and enemies, and to avoid surprise. But as there is no night in the new Jerusalem, these precautions would be unnecessary.

27. *Anything that defileth.* — All glory and all honor will be conferred upon the new Jerusalem, that the nations can bring. Everything that defileth will be excluded from it, because "the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God." They must be *washed*, and *sanctified*, and *saved*, before they can enter. Only *the saved* shall walk in the light of it, those whose names are enrolled among the Christian believers, in the Lamb's book of life. The conclusion of this description will be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Preliminary Remarks.* — In the preceding chapter we found an account of the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven; and a description of it under the figure of an earthly city. This description had not closed at the end of the chapter, but is continued to

## CHAPTER XXII.

AND he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

the end of the fifth verse of the chapter now before us.

1. *Pure river of the water of life.* — The throne of God is supposed by the revelator to be set up in the new Jerusalem. It is a divine kingdom in which God reigns in conjunction with the Son, and of course the throne of God and the Lamb is represented as being there. See verse 3. From the throne of God and the Lamb, or from under the throne, came out a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal. Nothing adds more to the beauty, comfort, and health of a city, than a river running through it. In describing a perfect city, therefore, the river is introduced. In the garden of Eden, the perfection of beauty, there was the river to water it; Gen. ii. 10. But unquestionably the revelator had his mind on Ezekiel's description of the city. Ezekiel had thereby prefigured the happy state of the Jews after their return from captivity. As he had prefigured their return to Jerusalem by the resurrection in the valley that had been filled with dry bones, so he proceeds to describe a city for them to dwell in. As the Christians, by the help of God, were to overcome Gog and Magog, viz., their spiritual enemies, they must have a spiritual city to dwell in, and the new Jerusalem was that city. And as Ezekiel saw the waters issue out from under the threshold of the house eastward, xlvii. 1, so here, in the new Jerusalem, the waters issue from beneath the throne. The waters which Ezekiel saw were healing, living waters: "Everything shall live, (said the prophet,) whither the river cometh;" ver. 9. So in the revelator's description, the water is called the "water of life, clear as crystal."

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of

2. *On either side of the river.* — This description is clearly taken from Ezekiel, as well as that of the preceding verse. Hear what the prophet says: "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine;" xlvii. 12. In the description of a beautiful garden, how is the scene heightened by the introduction of a pure stream of water. See Solomon's description: "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranate, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices; a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon;" Song, iv. 13—15. ¶ *Tree of life.* — In Ezekiel's description, the healing tree, or tree of life, was seen on either bank of the river, yielding its fruit monthly, the leaves of which were for medicine. The revelator paints a street on each side of the river, and between the street and the brink of the river on either side grew the tree of life. Not that there was *one* tree only; but that all the trees were of that species. They were all the tree of life. ¶ *Yielded her fruit every month.* — And this tree bore its fruit every month. It is not intended that the tree bore twelve different kinds of fruit, for no tree does this; but it afforded twelve harvests in the year. It is said the tree bore twelve fruits; and this is explained by the re

the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it;

mark, that it yielded its fruit every month. ¶ *The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* — It might truly then be called the tree of life. Its very leaves were of a healing quality. This language in respect to the nations shows, that by the new Jerusalem the revelator was not describing the immortal state of man, but a happy state on the earth, where nations exist. Although Professor Stuart maintains that by the new Jerusalem the revelator intended "the final abode of the faithful servants of the Redeemer," (ii. 389,) yet on this verse he is constrained to acknowledge, that "the distant nations may derive healing and life-preserving virtue from the leaves of the trees, carried abroad and distributed among them." This would seem to show that the tree of life was a blessing enjoyed on the earth. In the preceding chapter it had been said, concerning the new Jerusalem, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it;" xxi. 24. Is it possible this can be a description of the immortal state? Every one must see it is not. How, then, can the events of the twentieth chapter be referred to the future world? The events of that chapter certainly transpired before those described in xxi. and xxii.

3. *There shall be no more curse.* — Everything evil shall be excluded from the new Jerusalem, for the throne of God and the Lamb is there. In Zechariah's description of the renewed state of Jerusalem, he says: "And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited;" xiv. 11. Blessed with the river of life, and the tree of life, how could

and his servants shall serve him.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night

any curse remain? Everything should live whither the river should come. Death, therefore, shall be entirely removed; and as the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, there cannot remain any curse in the new Jerusalem. ¶ *The throne of God shall be there.* — This seems borrowed from Ezekiel's description of the renovated Jerusalem. "It was round about eighteen thousand measures; and the name of the city from that day shall be, THE LORD IS THERE;" Ezk. xlviii. 35. The description resembles very strikingly a passage in the previous part of the Apocalypse, where the revelator was treating more particularly of the Jews. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" Rev. vii. 15—17. How truly was it said, "There shall be no more curse." "His servants shall serve him."

4. *They shall see his face.* — To see God's face means to live in near communion with him. Thus we read: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God;" Matt. v. 8. To see the Lord is, by some, supposed to signify being in his immediate presence in the immortal world; and it is thought the passage intimates that some will never thus see him. But, however true it is that all men must be perfectly holy before they can be perfectly happy in the future life, still the phrase to see God is used, by the

there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:

Hebrew writers, to denote a state of spiritual honor and enjoyment *in the present life*. The expression arose from the customs of the eastern kings. "To behold the king's face, was considered an honor and happiness; much more to see it habitually, that is, to be employed in his immediate service, and to enjoy his favor. Thus, also, the expression to *see God* signifies to experience his friendship, and to be admitted to the greatest happiness in his presence; whereas, *not to see him* is to be shut out from his favor, and to be under his awful displeasure. Christ says of his humblest followers, that in heaven their angels do *always behold the face* of his heavenly Father; referring to the usage of earthly courts, where such as always behold the monarch's face were highest in office and regard. By this he signified, that these little ones had a powerful interest in heaven, and were peculiarly dear to God himself; so that it became men to take heed how they despised them; Matt. xviii. 10. To sit next the king, especially on his right hand, was a mark of the highest honor and dignity; 1 Kings ii. 10; Matt. xx. 20—23; Heb. i. 3." — (*New-in's Biblical Antiquities*, i. 247.) ¶ *His name shall be in their foreheads*; i. e., shall be written in the most conspicuous place. Their profession shall be very open; they shall be known undoubtedly as the servants of God. The same figure has occurred before in the Apocalypse: "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name;" iii. 12. See, also, vii. 3; xiv. 1.

5. *Need no candle, neither light of the sun.* — This is a repetition of what

and they shall reign forever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These

was said xxi. 23, 25, and we refer the reader to the remarks on those verses. These metaphors of the fulness and beauty of God's house, of the river of water, the fountain of life, and the special light of God's countenance, are very ancient. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light;" Psa. xxxvi. 8, 9. The metaphor of the *reign*, we have shown, is of frequent occurrence in the Apocalypse, and in other parts of the Bible. See ii. 26, 27; iii. 21; iv. 4; v. 10; xi. 17; xx. 4, 6. Thus the revelator brings to a close the description of the new Jerusalem, commenced at the tenth verse of the preceding chapter. Why the division of the chapters should have been made as it was, we cannot imagine. Why were the first five verses of this chapter separated from that which preceded them? We adopt the language of Professor Stuart: — "What could have induced the author of the division of the New Testament into chapters to disjoin the first five verses, it is difficult to see. They belong inseparably to the preceding description. A new chapter should have begun with xxii. 6, which commences the epilogue to the book. But it is useless to complain of these unskilful separations now. The Scriptures have so long been printed and quoted in their present form, that the mistake cannot be well retrieved." — (Com., ii. 387, *note*.)

#### CONCLUSION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

We have now come to the epilogue, or conclusion, of the work. This is divided into three parts. 1st. The concluding remarks of the angel, who had been sent by God, "to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;" i. 1. The whole book

sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

of Revelation, from the very commencement of it to the fifth verse of chapter xxii., is the communication made by that angel to the revelator. Then follow the angel's concluding remarks. 2d. The remarks of the Lord Jesus, confirming what the revelator had said, extending from verse 12 to verse 20. 3d. The benediction of the revelator. And, 1st, the concluding words of the angel; vers. 6—11.

6. *He said unto me.*—Since the work, in the main, is here completed, the angel reassures the revelator of the truth of his words. This is the same angel mentioned i. 1, who had revealed the whole matter of the book;—he said, at the conclusion, to the revelator, “The sayings are faithful and true,”—a solemn declaration of their truth and importance. This was not an uncommon form of speech. See xix. 9; xxi. 5. ¶ *The Lord God of the holy prophets.*—Well might the angel speak of the Deity in these terms. The revelator had himself been a diligent student of the prophets. The great truths that had been urged by him had been previously foretold by them. He was himself a prophet, for he foretold future events—things which were shortly to come to pass. He claimed to be instructed to make those communications by the Lord God of the holy prophets; so that the same divine character was to be ascribed to his book which the Jews had been accustomed to ascribe to the prophecies of old. ¶ *Sent his angel.*—This Lord God of the holy prophets had sent his angel to testify these things to John, his servant. See the following: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these

sent and signified it *by his angel* unto his servant John;” i. 1. Thus we see, that he reasserts, at the close of the book, what he had declared at its beginning. ¶ *Shortly be done.*—And observe, the angel, who opened the whole matter to him, showed him nothing except what was shortly to come to pass. Mark this well. How, then, can it be supposed that the principal judgments mentioned in this book have not yet taken place? The angel showed unto the revelator only “the things which must shortly be done.”

7. *I come quickly.*—Behold, that is, take special notice of this fact; let it not be passed by through inattention,—“I come quickly.” The language is here put in the first person, because it is precisely the same language which Jesus used in reference to the same event. See verses 10, 12, 20. The coming of Christ was then speedily to take place. ¶ *Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings, &c.*—Blessed, happy is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; not *heareth* merely, but *keepeth*. The book of Revelation is a prophecy; but the events were not far distant. The people of the generation in which the revelator lived were personally interested in them; they were called upon to remember them and keep them; and happy would they be if they did so, for the time was at hand. “I come quickly.”

8. *I John saw, &c.*—The revelator here gives his name, John. That John, the apostle, was the author of this book, we have clearly shown in the introduction, and also in various parts of the commentary. He saw the things which he had described, he saw the visions, the scenery, &c., &c. He heard the words which had been

things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me,

uttered to him. It is a reâffirmation that the facts of the book of Revelation were divinely communicated to him. He described them, it is true, in his own style and manner; the images were the most of them borrowed from the prophetic writings. But the message itself, the great truths he communicated, he had heard and seen. At the very beginning of the book, John was commanded to write the things which he had seen; i. 19. Some of the things which John saw were past, some were then present, and some were future, but were shortly to come to pass. ¶ *I fell down to worship.*—The revelator adds: "And when I had heard and seen," to wit, when he had heard and seen all that had been revealed to him, he was overwhelmed with wonder. He fell down to do homage to the angel-revelator. He seems to have worshipped him as a divine person; he seems to have rendered to him the worship that belonged to God. His falling down was the effect of what he had heard and seen. He had been impressed similarly on a former occasion; xix. 10.

9. *See thou do it not.*—Thus, it will be seen, the angel forbid the revelator worshipping him. The reason why worship should not have been rendered to the angel was, he was fellow-servant to the revelator, and of his brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of the book. That there was a class of men in the Christian church called prophets, see 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Perhaps his meaning was, "I am like the prophets, merely a servant of God,—I am not entitled to divine honors more than they. Worship not me—worship God."

See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me,

10. *Seal not the sayings.*—The angel still continues, but he was near the close of his communications; he is about to give his last advice, his closing admonition: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." To use the words of Dr. A. Clarke: "Do not lay up these sayings for future generations; they concern the present times; *they must shortly come to pass, for the time is at hand.*" See verse 6. It is a well-known fact, that, when important events revealed through the prophets or inspired men of old were not to be fulfilled or accomplished till some very remote period, or for a long time after the prediction was made, the prophets were commanded to *seal up* the roll, or the sayings thereof, because the time of fulfilment was distant. Thus, in Dan. viii. 26, Gabriel says to the prophet, "The vision of the evening and the morning, which was told, is true; wherefore, *shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days;*" that is, its fulfilment is to be at a remote period. Again; xii. 4, 9, 12, 13: "Thou, O Daniel, *shut up the words, and seal the book,* even to the time of the end. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." On the other hand, where the events were to take place immediately, or very soon, the prophet was forbidden to seal the sayings of the book; as in the events spoken of in the text and context, on which we are now remarking. See Lightfoot, iii. 368. It should not be forgotten, that both at the beginning of the Apocalypse and at its close, it is insisted that the time

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

of the fulfilment is at hand. See chap. i. 1—3: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things *which must SHORTLY come to pass*; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND." This was the language of the apostles in regard to the advent of Christ to judgment. Paul to the Romans: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand;" xiii. 12. To the Philippians: "The Lord is at hand;" iv. 5. Peter also testifies to the same fact: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer;" iv. 7. With this weight of testimony before us, how can we doubt that the advent of Christ to judgment transpired very shortly after the revelator wrote? Professor Stuart admits that the whole Apocalypse, excepting chapters xx. and xxi., refers to things that were speedily to take place when the revelator wrote. He says, "We are at liberty, or rather, *we are obliged*, if possible, to seek for a fulfilment of the predictions in the main body of the Apocalypse within a time which is not far distant from the period when the book was written. If such a fulfilment can be found as coincides with the periods named in the Apocalypse, then what good reason can be offered why we should reject it? Or, rather, *Why are we not exegetically obliged to admit it?*"—(Hints on Prophecy: Andover, 1842: p. 113.) The main body of the Apocalypse! Why does not the professor say *the whole book*? Why should he separate one or two chapters from the main drift of the

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:

book, and apply them to the distant future? If the revelator had intended to apply them to the distant future, would he not have said, These things are *not* speedily to come to pass? these things are to be excepted from the great declaration? But he did no such thing. He gave not the slightest hint, in regard to the 20th and 21st chapters, that the events therein spoken of were not speedily to come to pass, or to commence to come to pass, like all the events mentioned in the book. There is but one thing more the angel-revelator has to communicate, and that is stated in the next verse.

11. *Let him be unjust still.*—This passage is supposed, by many, to prove, that there can be no change in the moral condition of man after death, and that those who die in a state of rebellion and irreconciliation to God, must eternally remain so. But does the text declare any such thing? or, can such a sentiment be deduced, or even inferred, from the passage, taking the whole context into the account? We think not. There is nothing said in the text or context about the death of the body; nothing said about the resurrection to immortal life; nothing said about another state of existence; nor anything that would naturally lead the reader to suppose any other state but the present was at all referred to. The whole scope of the context would lead to the supposition that the events spoken of were then about to transpire. John was forbidden to seal the book, for the very reason that the *time was at hand*. Running through all the instructions of Christ and his apostles, is this distinct fact, to wit, that if persons would not be warned of the approaching advent of Christ, and prepare for it, they must expect to perish. If the Christians would not

and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that

be watchful and faithful, so as to be ready to meet their Lord at his coming, they were to be involved in the same punishments with the unbelievers. When their Lord should come, they would not find themselves prepared, and could not therefore enjoy the benefits of his coming. If, under the mistaken idea that their Lord delayed his coming, they were unfaithful and disobedient, the Lord would come when they looked not for him, and in an hour that they were not aware of, and cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites ; Matt. xxiv. 48—51. If men neglect their present opportunities of improvement, they may afterward desire to gain the advantages they have lost, and not be able to gain them. This is fully shown by Solomon, in Prov. i. 24—31. Here we see, that, having neglected their opportunities of improvement, they afterwards saw the need of the blessings they had missed. Yet they could not gain them. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for they hated knowledge, and did not choose to fear the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices;" 28—31. The punishment was unavoidable. They *must* "eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." All this is confirmed by the experience of men in this world. It is taught us by observation every day. The same principle held good in the days of Christ. He repeatedly assured his disciples that his coming should take place in that generation. He should come as a thief in the night. When the people should say, "Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not

escape;" 1 Thess. v. 3. But it was not expected the faithful Christians would be thus overtaken. Hence Paul says to them, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Though let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober;" 1 Thess. v. 4—6. The enemies of Jesus it was expected of course would be overwhelmed in the approaching judgments; but there was another class that would also fall, viz., the unfaithful and unwatchful disciples. They should have their portion with the hypocrites. The parable of the virgins, Matt. xxv. 1, represented the wise and foolish Christians—those who prepared for their Master's coming, and those who did not. "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish saith unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not;" 6—12. That this had respect to the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem no one can doubt. And let it be observed, that the unwatchful disciples desired to repair the effects of their unwatchfulness, but they could not, because "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." The same was true of

is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And behold, I come

the open enemies of Jesus, as well as of his unfaithful disciples. While they were comparatively safe, eating and drinking, and making merry, they could not profess the name of Christ before men; but when thick troubles began to gather upon the Jewish church and state, and the divine favor began to be manifested in an unusual manner in favor of the persecuted religion of Jesus, then they turned their eyes to him, and cried, "Lord, Lord, open the gate of the gospel unto us." To these events the following words of Christ are applicable: "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, *when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels;*" and Jesus assured them that this should take place during the natural lives of that generation; Mark viii. 38, compared with ix. 1. To illustrate this fact, the parable found in Luke xiii. 24—28 was spoken. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The purport of this advice is, strive to enter *now* into the acceptance and profession of my gospel; be not ashamed of me or my doctrine before this sinful generation. If you do not embrace the present opportunity, the time will come when you will regret it. Your nation will soon be overthrown with the most dreadful calamities; and then not a hair on the heads of my disciples shall be hurt. When that time comes, it will be too late for you to enter the

kingdom of God; the door will be shut; you will wish you had embraced past opportunities; but it will be of no avail; you will put forth pretences and claims to be considered my followers, but you will not have the test of true discipleship. At that critical time, there cannot be this change of character. Christians then will be Christians, and enemies must remain enemies—the judgment cannot be averted. "He that is unjust will then be unjust still; he that is righteous will be righteous still; and he that is holy will be holy still." We have thus finished our examination of the words of the angel-revelator. There now follows the confirmation by the Lord Jesus himself of what the angel had said.

#### CONFIRMATION BY THE ALPHA AND OMEGA.

There seems to be a striking propriety that the Lord Jesus should give his confirmation of what the revelator had said, if the revelator had faithfully delivered his message. Look at the first verse of the book once more. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." This is the title of the book, and would well appear as the title-page. The revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. He received it from his Father. He communicated it to John, by whom it was to be communicated unto the churches. When John had finished his communications, the query would naturally arise, has he done his work faithfully? To show that he had done so, Jesus gave his confirmation.

12. *Behold, I come quickly.*—Here, the first fact which Jesus confirmed, was the great fact that his coming was to take place *quickly*. He knew well when that event was to happen.

quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do

As if he had said, "I wish to confirm what John has written, especially on this point; and therefore I say, **BETHOLD, I COME QUICKLY.**" ¶ *To give every man according as his work shall be.*—Who can fail here to recall to mind the words of Christ, spoken during his flesh? "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Matt. xvi. 27, 28. See, also, Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27. Jesus said his reward was with him, *to give every man according as his work shall be*; i. e., at his coming, which he then said was to take place *quickly*. Is there not a close connection, then, between this passage and Rev. xx. 12, where we read that the dead, small and great, stood before God, and were judged every man according to his works?

13. *I am Alpha and Omega.*—And to make his confirmation the more solemn, he adds, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." The phrase Alpha and Omega is explained by the words which immediately follow. Alpha is "the beginning," "the first;" Omega "the end," "the last." Alpha was the first and Omega the last letter of the Greek alphabet.

14. *Blessed are they that do, &c.*—Mark, those only were promised the blessing who *did* his commandments. Not every one that said, Lord, Lord, should enter into the kingdom of heaven, but "he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven;" Matt.

his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters,

vii. 21. ¶ *Have right to the tree of life.*—They shall partake of the tree of life. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" Rev. ii. 7. This figure of the tree of life is taken from the account of the tree of life in the garden of Eden, Gen. ii. 22—24. In describing the heavenly city, new Jerusalem, we have seen that John placed the tree of life in the midst of it; xxii. 2. To have right to the tree of life was to have right to the blessings of the new Jerusalem, or, in other words, of the gospel kingdom into which the faithful Christians were to enter. They were to "enter in through the gates into the city." How much is said in the New Testament about "entering into life," "in at the strait gate," "into the kingdom of heaven," "into the joy of the Lord," "into rest." These expressions all mean the same thing. There is a great variety of metaphor, but the same intent in all. The holy city represented the gospel covenant. Blessed were they who entered in. See the long note on Rev. ii. 7.

15. *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, &c.*—Those who did not enter through faith and obedience into the city, must, of course, remain without. The city was full of light; and therefore those without are said, by way of contrast, to be in "*outer darkness*;" i. e., they were outside of the kingdom. They had not passed through the gates into the city; Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13; xxv. 30. Unbelievers and unfaithful professors were said to stand *without*; and after the troubles began, and it was too late for them to change their position, they knocked earnestly for admission; Luke xiii. 25. These en-

and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning-star.

17 And the Spirit and the

emies of Jesus, both secret and avowed, were represented by anything that was vile. The dog, being an unclean, furious animal, is conspicuous among the metaphors. Paul said, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision;" Phil. iii. 2. Compare with this verse, Rev. xxi. 8, 27.

16. *To testify unto you these things.*—This was in the most direct strain of approval. He assumed the responsibility of what had been said. He was coming *quickly* to judge the nations; the good should enter into the kingdom and be happy; the opposite class should remain without and be punished. These were the great points that had been insisted on through the whole Apocalypse. Hence Jesus said, "I have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things, in the churches." ¶ *I am the root, &c.*—And to show that he had authority to speak, he adds, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning-star." See Rev. v. 5, and the note there.

JESUS' INVITATION TO THE NEW JERUSALEM.

17. *Whosoever will, let him come.*—All are invited to come. The invitation goes out to all, from the highest authority,—COME. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. The Spirit had spoken to the churches through John, and what the Spirit said was of the utmost importance. Hence the oft-repeated injunction, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;" ii. 7, 11, 17, 29;

bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things,

iii. 6, 13, 22. The Spirit saith,—COME. And the Bride also, the Lamb's wife, saith to all men, COME; Rev. xxi. 9. Let the invitation be repeated. Let him who hath an ear to hear it, repeat it. ¶ *Water of life.*—Let him that is athirst come, for it is the water of life that is proffered. The gospel is a blessing; it meets the wants of man. When it is represented by bread, the hungry are invited, when by water, or milk, or wine, the thirsty are called; Isa. lv. 1. When by rest, the weary and heavy laden are entreated to come; Matt. xi. 28—30. The gospel is presented in the most alluring manner; not as a luxury, but as a substantial necessity, without which men cannot live. One of the most expressive figures is that of the "water of life;" Jer. ii. 13; John iv. 10—15: Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 6. This treasure, so precious, is open to all. There is no restriction. "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life *freely*." It would be impossible to give a more general, or more earnest, or more alluring invitation. There is sufficient for all men in the new Jerusalem. There are not merely a few drops of water, a scanty supply, but A RIVER,—"*a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*;" xxii. 1.

THE APOCALYPSE GUARDED AGAINST CORRUPTION.

18. *If any man shall add unto these things.*—The prophecies of the book of Revelation having thus been completed, Jesus, the Alpha and Omega,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book :

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the

book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

was desirous to preserve them from being corrupted. The Christians possibly might be tempted to corrupt them, for some did corrupt the word of God; 2 Cor. ii. 17. Of course the avowed enemies of the church could not corrupt the sacred writings; for they, being known as enemies, would not have the power to give currency to their deceptions. But it was the unstable professors who might do this, and so wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction; 2 Pet. iii. 16. And if they did so, either by adding to the book, or taking away from it, what fate awaited them? Ans. They would have their portion with the hypocrites, for they would lose their part in the holy city, and from all the blessings written in the book, and there would be added to them the plagues that are written in the book. What are the plagues *that are written in this book*? Have we not shown that they are not to be referred to the immortal state? See them spoken of, ix. 20, and compare with the preceding part of the chapter. See, also, xi. 6, where it is said the two witnesses have power to smite *the earth* with the plagues. See, again, xvi. 9. If the reader will peruse the whole of the sixteenth chapter, particularly the first verse, he will see that these plagues were poured out "*upon the earth.*" Again, see xviii. 4, 8, where we are told, that "her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her." Were not these plagues on the earth? But let us look once more. In xv. 1 we read, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the **seven LAST plagues**; for in them is **FILLED UP the wrath of God.**" Again, in

verse 6, it is said that "The seven angels came out of the temple having the seven [last] plagues. See verses 7 and 8. In the next chapter [xvi.] we read of the manner in which these seven angels poured out the seven "*last plagues*;" and a slight examination will show that they were all poured out upon the earth. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of **GOD UPON THE EARTH.**" The first vial was poured out upon the earth, meaning on the land; verse 2. The second was poured out upon the sea; verse 3. The third was poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water; verse 4. "The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun;" verses 8, 9. "The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast;" verses 10, 11. "The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates;" verses 15, 16. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air;" verses 17—21. These were the seven angels having the seven last plagues, and this was the manner in which the seven last plagues were poured out. They embraced all the judgments that were to be inflicted on the persecutors of Christianity. If any other plagues are denounced in the Apocalypse, which remain yet to be fulfilled, these were not the last. But they are expressly said to be *the last*, meaning the last plagues of the Apocalypse, and they were all poured on the earth. If any judgments denounced in that book yet remain to be fulfilled in the future state, then the revelator made an error when he said the plagues he described were the seven *last* plagues. Now when it is said, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

him the *plagues that are written in this book*," — what other plagues can be referred to than those which are enumerated above? In the interpretation we have given of this subject, we are confirmed by two of the best critics. Hammond paraphrases the two verses as follows: "As for all those to whom this prophecy will come, I conjure them all, that they change not a tittle of it, and withal, that they look upon it as the last authoritative prophecy that is likely to come from heaven, to be a rule of faith to the church. What is here said, is decreed and settled immutable; no man shall be able to avert it; and whosoever shall go about to infuse any other expectations into men than what are agreeable to these visions, God shall bring on him the judgments that are here denounced against God's greatest enemies. And so in like manner, whosoever shall derogate anything from the authority of this prophecy, or take out any part of it, or occasion men's not receiving the admonition of Christ here contained, in every part thereof, God shall cast him off, throw him out of the church, account him incapable of all the blessings which are here promised to the faithful Christians." And the learned Grotius, in his "Annotations," speaks as follows: "*God shall add unto him the plagues*: by the plagues are to be understood as well those in chapter vii., ix., x., and xi., as those in chapter xvi., xvii., and xviii.; of which one portion relates to the Jews, and the other to the Roman empire. *And out of the holy city*: he shall not be a member of the church, but shall be cast out, as one making a lie." Let us remember the solemn assurance which Solomon has

left on record: "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;" Prov. xxx. 5, 6. Here the closing benediction would have come, but the Lord Jesus embraced the last opportunity to declare that his coming should take place *speedily*. See the succeeding verse.

20. *He which testifieth*. — Jesus had said, (verse 18,) "I testify unto every man," &c.; and hence the expression, "He who testifieth these things saith, surely," &c. ¶ *I come quickly*. — And what is it that is here distinctly testified? It is the great fact of the near approaching coming of Christ. "I COME QUICKLY." Such were the closing words of Jesus. "Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus," said the revelator. Was there any fact disclosed in the whole Bible that was insisted on with more earnestness than that of the *nearness* and *immediateness* of Christ's coming? In the chapter we have now considered, we find John first declaring it, verses 6 and 7. Then the angel-revelator repeats it, ver. 10. Then the Lord Jesus, on his part, gives the same assurance, ver. 12, and adds his whole authority to sustain that declaration, ver. 13. And finally, in closing, apparently with the purpose to assert it with double force, and to make it the main point on which the minds of the Christians of that age should dwell, he says, "SURELY, I COME QUICKLY."

We close by quoting the last verse of the book, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*"



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